HETERODOX LONDON

OR

PHASES OF FREE THOUGHT IN THE METROPOLIS

C. MAURICE DAVIES

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE

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HETERODOX LONDON:

OR,

PHASES OF FREE THOUGHT IN THE METROPOLIS.

BY

REV. CHARLES MAURICE DAVIES, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "ORTHODOX" AND "UNORTHODOX LONDON," ETC.

"PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.
1874.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
MAY 1 1970

TO MY FRIEND,

MRS. MAKDOUGALL GREGORY,

I Dedicate

THIS NOW CONCLUDED SERIES OF VOLUMES ON THE RELIGIONS OF LONDON.

MAURICE DAVIES.

London, 1874.

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ERRATA.

Page 201, line 3, and page 202, first line,
for "Will," *read* "Vrill."

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INTRODUCTION.

I AM well aware that to excuse is to accuse one's self; but I fancy I see my orthodox friends uplifting both hands in pious dismay, and hear them exclaiming, "*Usque quo tandem?* Having exhausted Unorthodoxy, and had his fling at Orthodoxy, what remains for this most analytical of authors to do next?"

I will tell them.

After going through the different phases of our multiform Church of England as by law established, and also the various outlying bodies, all of which claimed orthodoxy, and many boasting that they exhausted it, I found a large margin still remaining in those who made neither claim, and asserted no lot or inheritance even in the larger Church of England, yet most of whom were, in their own sense of the word, religious. I saw that, where these bodies were secular and materialistic, the line between religion and politics became shadowy and ill-defined, and that if my work was to comprehend the whole world of religious London, it must include some of these. The

result was the resumption of my pen, and the gradual accretion of a vast mass of data, from which the materials for the present volumes have been selected.

Several of the chapters which succeed have already seen the light in the columns of newspapers—some in London daily papers, many of them in the *Manchester Evening News*, a few in the *Scottish Guardian*, and others in a local journal which I have edited. Urged at last by inexorable time, and my publishers' call for "more copy," I have written down the results of my ecclesiastical wanderings in the "far countries" where my observations were made, at last literally racing the press to bring my work to its conclusion. Perhaps, when the nature of that work is considered, it will scarcely have suffered by this rapid style of composition. It affects to be no more than what one of my many kindly critics termed its predecessor, a series of "literary photographs," a collection of pen-and-ink portraits of men who are, in their several departments, influencing the tone of current thought, and leaving their mark on our day and generation. During some portion of the time while I wrote I was in full parochial work in a London curacy, and had to snatch rare intervals of leisure between frequent services on Sundays and week-days. This, again, I cannot regret, for I found my several works, in and out of church, re-act one on the other. I hope a sense of my own shortcomings made me look with toleration on the gropings of others after truth. I am sure the observation of their

successes or failures made me less dogmatic in my own pulpit teachings. These are suspended now; but the combined work has left deeply impressed upon my own mind the consummate wisdom of the text I have chosen as my motto, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."

I must apologize—I use the word in its strict rather than in its ordinary sense—for the length to which my chapters run in this work. I felt it right to let those whom I reported speak for themselves. Free Thought, or Advanced Thought, has been too often condemned without a hearing. It is not for me to say whether those whom I chronicle are right or wrong; but I may, without undue advocacy, state my conviction that they are thoroughly honest, and intensely in earnest; and I feel that those who believe them to be wrong ought to be made aware of the nature and extent of the error—if "error" it be—with which they have to cope. I had no idea of this when I entered on my present study. I spoke and thought vaguely of "Infidelity," "Free Thought," "Secularism," and "Atheism." I scarcely realized the lines of demarcation between them, or how they met and blended imperceptibly the one in the other.

I feel also that there are some few of those about whom I have written who may be disposed to resent their inclusion in a book bearing the title of "Heterodox." I have, in the body of the work, continually made the remark that I use the term in its

etymological rather than its colloquial sense. I feel I have a right to use it wherever those I am describing themselves repudiate the title of orthodox; and I have strictly so limited myself. I am thinking especially of the Swedenborgians, or New Jerusalem Church, when I speak thus. They have made no protest against the imputation of Heterodoxy or Mysticism; and I therefore the more readily assure them that I use the terms in an utterly inoffensive sense. In first projecting my book, I contemplated the alternative title, "Phases of Unbelief in London." Had I retained that expression on my title-page, I could of course have only included those who fell short of the standard of belief in the Established Church, which I have been obliged all along to take arbitrarily as my average. But there is a heresy of excess, as well as of defect, and only so could my excellent friend Dr. Bayley become the subject of my remarks. It was as the complement and corollary of the chapters on Modern Spiritualism that I felt some notice of the New Jerusalem Church to be necessary. The Irvingites, or *soi-disant* "Catholic Apostolic Church," might have claimed mention in the same way, their "unknown tongues" and "prophecies" being palpably a phase of trance-mediumship; but that body so studiously threw impediments in the way of anything like a fair examination on a former occasion, that I felt it was hopeless to expect any distinct statement of their tenets and practices.

Moreover, in spite of vigorous private proselytizing and a spasmodic platform propagandism, the body can scarcely be deemed characteristic of the present religious thought of London; indeed, it promises to become ere long as moribund and effete as its well-nigh obsolete Apostolate.

Adverse critics might easily describe my present method as one of paste, scissors, and padding; and it is from no wish to anticipate such a judgment, but in simple justice to myself, to urge that the selection of a typical discourse from the published works of those I was describing has been about the most difficult, certainly the least interesting portion of my task. It could scarcely be, however, that I should, in each case when I paid a flying visit, fall in with a thoroughly characteristic discourse or lecture; and there I felt bound to supplement my account with something that *was* an embodiment of the real opinions of the man or the sect. In the case of Mr. Bradlaugh, I *did* get two discourses, which I venture to think eminently characteristic of his religious and political opinions; and in these, let me say, I have been obliged to trust to my own reports. The lectures at the Hall of Science are not as a rule taken down; and where this is the case I have to be satisfied with a few rough notes, jotted down during the discourse or debate, and afterwards aided by a not very retentive memory in their transcription.

It is, of course, inevitable that only one side of the

question presents itself in this book, which will therefore assume the appearance of advocacy; but not more so than its predecessors did in the cases of Dissent and Established doctrines. It was certainly desirable to let Unbelief speak for itself as freely as the various grades of faith. Not to have done so would have been to act the advocate indeed: and I cannot help thinking that the suppression of Heterodox subjects, and careful concealment of infidel arguments, is, on the *omne ignotum pro magnifico* principle, exceedingly dangerous—far more dangerous than the fullest quotation, as appearing like a concession that such utterances, if allowed to go forth, must of necessity carry conviction with them. I can well remember that, when I was a boy, a pious but injudicious relative warned me never to read Byron, showing me at the same time Moore's twenty-two volumes, carefully locked inside a wire grating in the study. The consequence was I never rested night or day until I had filched the key and read the whole dozen and ten through from beginning to end; whereas I should certainly have been scared by the mere dimensions of the work had it been placed openly in my hands—and possibly it might have been well to defer the reading of certain passages of both Life and Works until I was a little older. I grieve to add, too, that most of my studies were made on Sunday, when the family went to church three times a day, and I was occasionally "indisposed"—rather frequently, I fear—

while the perusal of those twenty-two volumes was going on. In these days of cheap literature and outspoken journalism, it is quite hopeless to think of concealing Heterodoxy. The very best method is to be outspoken too, and show a belief in the principle that Truth is great and will prevail.

I feel it the more necessary to dwell on this because once or twice, during the progress of these sheets through the press, I have found the hair of my esteemed publisher stand on end at the tremendous nature of some of the documents quoted, *e.g.*, Mr. Bradlaugh's Letter to the Prince of Wales, and the utterances of the Land and Labour League. I would gladly have suppressed these if I could have done so with justice to my subject; but I should have utterly failed to show the real genius of the movements in question had I adopted the ostrich-like policy of putting my head in a hole, and seeing nothing but what was decorous and satisfactory.

I will only add, in conclusion, that I believe the following pages to be fairly representative—not by any means exhaustive—of the great outlying world beyond the churches—a very *terra incognita* to the great mass of ordinary religious people. I must acknowledge the ready assistance I have met with from all, or nearly all, of the heterodox people with whom I have been brought into contact. They certainly have not sought to keep back their opinions or veil their practices from the fullest scrutiny. The

political bodies have been, naturally enough, a little more reticent than the religious; but even here I have had more materials volunteered than I could use. My thanks are specially due in this way to the Secretaries of the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund, the North London Secular Club, and the Tower Hamlets and Deptford Radical Associations, who supplied me with data which I can only thus acknowledge. I am extremely sorry that the Kansas Co-operation refused to answer my letters until too late, when the chairman wrote a few lines promising future particulars. The so-called—but certainly misnamed—"corresponding secretaries" never deigned to answer, even by forwarding the printed documents of the Association, of whose constitution I was therefore left as much in the dark as of that most Eleusinian of all mysteries which has quite eluded my investigations, and wrapped itself around with impenetrable silence—the Eleusis Club at Chelsea.

Still, I believe my list is representative, as I said, if not exhaustive; and these few exceptions only prove the rule of general courtesy and frankness by which I have been assisted in the execution of my interesting task.

M. D.

April, 1874.

HETERODOX LONDON.

THE NEMESIS OF FAITH.

As the greater includes the less, so it would be inevitable that, in a work on Heterodox London, one should embrace some names which would also appear in London "Unorthodox." The distinction appears to be virtually this—that while Unorthodoxy refers to those who deem themselves orthodox, yet whose claims from the standpoint of the Established Church would not be conceded, Heterodoxy is the special 'doxy of those who lay no claim to orthodoxy whatever, who elect to be heretical, and who would resent the imputation of doctrinal soundness as a personal affront. There is, at all events, none of the besetting danger lest we should offend such persons by openly exempting them from the wide embrace even of unorthodoxy itself.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway, of South Place, Finsbury, ministering in what is generally known as "Fox's Chapel," may be regarded either as at the north pole of mere unorthodoxy or, in his capacity of

pure Theist, in the subtropical region of heterodoxy. Beside a Congregationalist or a Wesleyan he would be a brand fit for the burning, but amongst Atheists and Freethinkers he is of the very strictest sect of the Pharisees. The novelty of being able to view this gentleman under such an aspect is positively refreshing.

Since my visit to South Place Chapel in old unorthodox days it had been completely refurbished, as if in anticipation of the position it was to occupy in the ranks of Heterodoxy. Open seats of quite ecclesiastical build had replaced the former cavernous pews, but the pulpit had simultaneously given place to a largish platform, on which was erected a rostrum of red mahogany, somewhat suggestive of a grocer's counter, perhaps in order to tone down the early Gothic character of the seats. Behind the rostrum half a dozen cane-bottom chairs gave the idea of an impending public meeting, and a grand piano covered with green baize lent rather a rakish air to the *tout ensemble.* But then, again, the counter was flanked by two gas standards almost orthodox in their configuration, and these were lighted on the occasion of my visit, though the morning was a particularly bright one. A pendent chandelier might have been termed by a very slender exercise of the imagination a "corona lucis." Altogether South Place Chapel seemed to be "looking up."

Once more, W. J. Fox's Old Hymnal had been supplemented with several hundred new hymns taken

from the most eclectic sources, but with great care and discrimination. The choir, too, was augmented and enlarged, so that it would have done credit to any Ritualistic Church in London. The old and surely most illogical link between broad doctrine and cold service seemed at last to have been discarded.

I was attracted to Mr. Conway's on this particular Sunday by seeing the subject of his oration set down as "The Nemesis of Faith," the title, some will recollect, of Mr. J. A. Froude's remarkable book, which provoked as much controversy as "Essays and Reviews" itself, when it first appeared. The authorities of Exeter College, Oxford, of which society Mr. Froude was a Fellow, were injudicious enough to burn the book publicly in Hall, thereby giving it about as good an advertisement as Archdeacon Denison did "Essays and Reviews" by proscribing it in Convocation. While the religious papers spoke of this circumstance in sensational headings as the "Public Burning of a Blasphemous Book," the literary organs lauded it to the skies, and the consequence was that all we undergrads possessed ourselves of the volume, and the recollection of the event lent an additional interest to the title of Mr. Conway's oration, which, I thought, might on other grounds as well, be distinctive as to the position of pure Theism in the ranks of metropolitan heterodoxy. I was not doomed to be disappointed.

The service—if so we might term it—was simplicity

itself. Three hymns—or rather two hymns and an anthem—were sung, all very creditably, the last with exceptional ability. Three lessons were read, one from the Psalms, a second from the Gospel of St. John, and a third from the book I have spoken of bearing the same title as Mr. Froude had chosen for his lecture. It was an excerpt from the singularly beautiful chapter where Markham Sutherland, the young clergyman, halting between Orthodoxy and Theism, muses among the ruins of an old abbey, and seems to hear its walls speak to him:—"And now look at me," the old ruin said; "centuries have rolled away, the young conqueror is decrepit now; dying, as the old faith died, in the scenes where that faith first died; and lingering where it lingered. The same sad, sweet scene is acting over once again. 'Twas the college of the priests, and they are gone, and I am but a dead ruin where the dead bury the dead. The village church is outliving me for a few more generations; there still ring, Sunday after Sunday, its old reverend bells, and there come still the simple peasants in their simple dresses—pastor and flock still with the old belief; there beneath its walls and ruins they still gather down into the dust, fathers and children sleeping there together, waiting for immortality; wives and husbands nestling side by side in fond hope that they shall wake and link again the love-chain which death has broken, so simple, so reverend, so beautiful! Yet is not that, too, all passing away, away beyond recall? The old monks

are dead. The hermit-saints and hallowed relics are dust and ashes now. The fairies dance no more around the charmed forest ring. They are gone, gone even here. The creed still seems to stand, but the creed is dead in the thoughts of mankind. Its roots are cut away, down where alone it can gather strength for life, and other forms are rising there; and once again and more and more, as day passes after day, the aged faith of aged centuries will be exiled as the old was to the simple inhabitants of these simple places. Once, once for all, if you would save your heart from breaking, learn this lesson—once for all you must cease, in this world, to believe in the eternity of any creed or form at all. Whatever grows in time is a child of time, and is born, and lives, and dies at its appointed day like ourselves."

It was a strange sensation to hear these secular sentences read in immediate sequence after the Bible lessons. The former, however, were not taken out of the Bible itself, but from the volume called "The Sacred Anthology," a book of ethnical scriptures, compiled by Mr. Conway from pretty well all the religious works of the world. A peculiar kind of exercise, which was neither quite a prayer nor altogether a meditation, was the only other ingredient in this remarkable conference; and then Mr. Conway, in the garb of ordinary existence, proceeded to descant upon "The Nemesis of Faith."

The commanding fact, he said, of the moral

sentiment is its enormous power. The Divine right of kings passes away; the Divine right of the moral law remains. The dynasty is an absolutism. When we include all the religions of mankind in one large scope they will appear as one grand testimony to an invisible moral element in the universe—to its potency and supremacy. We see the world bending beneath this force, as forests bend beneath the viewless wind. For fear of it, or love of it, men have surrendered all visible treasures; by its real or supposed laws nations and races have been organized: empires have risen and fallen beneath its might; and thousands of idols, oppressions, wrongs, shattered and perished, marked the path where has passed through the world the great conviction of a truth and justice reigning in this universe. Progress is to greater light not to darkness. Is that all chance? That which seems to make therein the true explanation of this power is the progressiveness of its unfoldings.

And yet while this progress is observable in the history of religion itself, strange to say, the history of each particular religion has been a history of deterioration. Those very beliefs which have attested to the races of men the triumphant advance of God and might are themselves the most salient instances which a disbeliever can quote against the reality of such an advance. There was a period—just twenty-five hundred years ago—when throughout the known world there was a bursting forth of religious enthusiasm,

a flowering of religious genius, such as the world had probably never known before, and certainly has never known since. It was in or about the sixth century before Christ that the great prophets broke forth with their burthens of rebuke or hope, and the historic religions took their place in the consciences of men. While Buddha was then invoking a new life from the shrunken seed of Brahmanism, Confucius was in China presiding at a similar new birth of religion in Humanity. While Plato and Socrates in the same age were detaching faith and philosophy from the rest of ages at Athens, Isaiah and Jeremiah were breathing into the dead forms of Judaism that new life which at last could embody itself only in a combination of many religions around it. When now we repair to that wonderful age, when by study we enter into its spirit, and draw near to the great hearts that were beating, the great souls that were kindled and kindling the world, we feel as if we were in some enchanted land, surrounded by sunlit summits all beautiful with the feet of heavenly messengers bringing glad tidings unto men.

A single step onward in time, and those radiant summits have grown dark and cold. The prophets are sepulchred under the shrines of superstition. Their glowing hymns of faith have hardened into creeds, the new life has been petrified in rites and forms, each the tomb of a great soul. The Buddhist temple, the Confucian temple, the Synagogue—they are now at

the end of their long decline—but mausoleums of the inspired. Jesus tried to revive the prophetic age in the synagogue; but His religion found there no soil to take root in, and had to be transplanted and spring up as a new religion in Europe—in Europe, where its root was fed by the decays of other religions, which had similarly dawned in splendour and set in darkness and degradation.

So far back, these deteriorations appear to us as strange phenomena, attending as they do the actual progressive civilization and the moral—we may even say religious growth of the world. But when we see the same phenomena of decline and decay going on in Christianity, we enter into a region related to our own history; we are able to look into the causes and arrive at certain conclusions. We find ourselves in an era when the ordinary Christian forms and dogmas have become so hard as to be galling; both heart and brain—thought and conscience—have found their thraldom intolerable, and have broken their chains. But now, having assumed an outside and critical attitude towards them, and turned round to analyse every Christian institution and creed, we find each to be the lifeless form of a truth. We find that, as if under some spell, sacred experiences and beautiful ideas have been deformed into a nightmare brood of repulsive rites and dogmas.

Just now we are witnessing a severe conflict concerning the confessional. It is plain that the people

have an unspeakable horror of this ancient institution of the Church, and it is surely revolting to the instinct of every healthy heart that men and women should be called upon to go through the exercise of laying before a mere perfunctory personage those inner feelings which are most intimate and sacred. Yet it is easy to look beyond the period when this became an official and priestly affair, and find the original of the father confessor in some truly paternal soul, whose faithfulness and sympathy drew to him the sorrowful and the dejected, whose heart defended those whom others cast out, whose wisdom guided those who spontaneously sought him amid the trials and temptations of life. How sacred and beautiful would be the influence of one such soul in a mediæval village of ignorant peasants! Nay, does not each of us know here and there in the busy world great-hearted, high-minded men and women, whose lives seem appointed to bear counsel and benediction to all around them? Let that pure and gentle influence be prisoned in a form, entrusted to an official, debased by a fee, and you have what auricular confession now is—a miserable counterfeit.

Or consider the dogmas. We find large sects building themselves up on what they call justification by faith, as it is usually stated, "without the deeds of the law." So far as that is not mere cant, it is great and dangerous error. For "the law" means to mankind now a moral law; and the idea that man is

justified before the Supreme Purity by any act of mental belief irrespective of his life and conduct, makes religion something hardly more respectable than conjuring. It reflects the very basest conceptions of deity. It implies that the Infinite God is so dependent upon what man may think or say of Him, that he is quite ready to condone the wrong-doings of a life provided He can have the complacent gratification of an abstract homage to His person. It is still more dangerous as implying a divine favouritism, whereby the beatitudes of virtue may be reached without being virtuous—without the fulfilment of any intervening conditions of self-denial or fidelity—but only by an intellectual prostration made abject by its intent to gain an advantage. Yet we have only to translate this bit of cant back into an age when it had a meaning, to see in it the human heart groping its way from the darkness of ages to the light. On the lips of a Paul such a thought went forth to a people to whom the deeds of the law meant a fulfilment of the requirements of a priesthood; it meant the offer of sacrifice, the performance of rites and penances; and the saving faith which was to supersede all these was a faith which meant adherence to a holy cause, fidelity to an unpopular truth, a faith which implied every self-denial, and a revolution of the whole life and character. Justification by a faith brave enough to disregard the requirements of a fictitious law meant just the reverse of what is meant

by the perverted and debased form in which it is now preached in support of divine favouritism and human egotism. Or take the ancient and modern ideas of an Incarnation. This we are told is a great mystery. God is represented as laying aside His glory, and descending to be born of a Virgin, and the very incredibility of this is cherished as its chief glory. It is a test for each man of the degree to which he is willing to submit to the authority of God. On the altar where man once bound a bullock, he must now bind his common sense. The bleeding victim must now be human reason. It is maintained that this mystery of the Incarnation is a purposed mystery—a planned impossibility—that man may delight God with the sight of his proud reason renounced and humbled. But turn back to the idealistic utterances which have thus been petrified into a coarse creed, and we find there is no mystery whatever. In that Gospel of John where Platonic idealism and the humanity of Christ are finely blended, an apostle in his rapture wrote that the Word—the divine Logos, or reason, was in Christ made flesh and dwelt amongst us. That eternal reason had been known only in the speculations of philosophers, and as the subject of metaphysical dispute; that Logos had now for the first time been expressed in the perfections of a life—been translated for the affections—and its beauty been seen and known as it dwelt among men. It was the wisdom of God breaking through the

monopoly of the schools, gaining that interpretation for the ignorant and poor which for the first time made it a universal reality. All that Plato had said of Reason, the humblest heart now felt in Christ. Thus the original idea of the descent of the Love and Wisdom of God to men through the warm pulses of a great human heart, was actually a protest against that obscurantism—that superfluous mystery of a pretentious theology—which it is now adduced to support.

And, indeed, in this and in many other instances which might be named, we are brought face to face with the startling phenomenon, that the present dogmas of Christian sects have not so much debased and deformed the ancient faith, as distinctly reversed it, and set up on the ruins of each truth the precise falsity against which it was originally directed.

I do not mean to say that the truths which beamed upon high souls in the dawn of great religions were not blended with much error. But it is the dictate of reason and fairness to credit a generation rather with what it added than with what it inherited, to honour in it not the traditions it could not break through, but the discoveries which it originated and transmitted as the antidote of its own lingering errors. It is said that Plato, with all his enlightenment, still offered sacrifice to the gods. Taylor, the translator of Plato, was once carried before a police-court by his landlady for sacrificing a bull to Jupiter in his back parlour.

This English Platonist did not more grossly sacrifice the spirit of his master to the letter than they who can remember only the degree to which an inherited Judaism still lingered in Jesus or Paul, and build their churches on their sacrificial language or their demonology—mere conventionalities of their age—rather than on the love, the fraternity, the moral beauty, which alone make the individuality of their existence or the grandeur of their place in history.

Now what is this Nemesis which thus ever pursues the influence of the great? What demon is it that, as with wheel and rudder, pursues by land and sea the inspiration of genius, the discoveries of thought, and, so soon as they have ripened, strikes them with decay? What power is it that has this black art of deforming every benefit, transmuting truth to error, changing the benefactors of mankind into enemies, and bringing the prophets of the past to stone their own brothers of to-day?

It is no other than that Nemesis which for ever follows success. It is that very familiar form of selfishness which has no aim but to be on the winning side. It fights for the wrong when it is strongest, and then rushes for the right when that is strongest; it is the ever-strong upon the strongest side. Who does not see in political life how noble have been the bands of men who from a pure love of justice rise up from age to age to redress some heavy wrong and affirm some great principle? Their devotion is the honour of

humanity. Their courage is the romance of history. Few in numbers, despised and rejected, they struggle on while they convince now one, now another, until at last their efforts are crowned with victory, the poor negro is set free, the oppressed are enfranchised, the starving are fed, the builders take up the rejected stone and make it the head of the corner.

But now comes the fatal Nemesis. Nothing succeeds like success. All the mean and selfish hasten to marshal themselves under the new flag; with vehemence, with enthusiasm, they embrace the truth they had before hated; they claim to have been its special friends, and grasp the banners of triumph, take the leadership, and reap the harvest of other men's labour. But, alas! their embrace is fatal. They touch the victorious truth only to make it over into their own base image. They take it on their lips only to defile it with the hostile spirit still in their hearts. And so all our political parties begin in grandeur and decline into self-seeking. It was the worst day that Christianity ever saw when it was able to shout "Victory!" When a successor of the Cæsars held the stirrup for a Christian Bishop to mount his horse, Christianity which swords could not stay nor dungeons conquer, fell vanquished on the instant. From that day the aggregate baseness of the world surrounded it. Kings allied themselves with it; tyrants took it under their fatal protection; it became the watchword of armies, the badge of ambition. Pagans paganized it; priests

betrayed its spirit with treacherous kiss; despots pressed the reeking sword into the hand of the Prince of Peace, and enthroned him over Europe with his foot on the neck of the serf, and armies marshalled across the path of progress.

Surely this long and dreary chapter of history carries with it an impressive lesson for the emancipated religion of to-day. The modern history of Christianity represents a series of herculean efforts to rescue it from its degrading chains which its own popularity have bound around it. But the remorseless Nemesis has pursued and overtaken each of these in turn. Luther rose with the cry for a free Bible. Protestantism in its triumph has made the free Bible to mean an enslaved intellect. George Fox came, Wesley came, but the Shadow walked by them, and their heroic hearts now label a mass of dead forms and decorous conventionalities essentially the same as those that awakened their scathing thunders.

But the living Faith does not die because men die. The workmen die, but the work goes on. The ever-renewed life of the heart goes on, the progressive liberation of mind and soul goes not backward. Free men stand in the world to-day, heirs of all the ages. We live in an age when the trammels of the past are visibly snapping around us, the ancient shrines crumbling. The free religious thought of our age is drawing nearer each day to that shore which is lined with the wrecks of so many brave barques that have gone

before it—the Shore of Success. It is in the air that the civilized world is swiftly becoming heretical. Science echoes the protest of the liberated conscience, and churches begin to whisper Rationalism. So long as the champions of free thought were a poor minority there was nothing to fear; so long as liberal religion was the client of a few despised Radicals, and could offer its adherents nothing but contempt and suffering, the sure filtration went on which must keep its ranks pure, a band disinterested, consecrated to simple Reason and Right. And what higher aim could that minority have than to diffuse its truth, and send its light to brighten and quicken a world afflicted and oppressed by error? Only this aim could be higher: to keep its testimony unsullied; to preserve its truth untainted by any compliance. In a world where every preceding religion has stooped to conquer—stooped and never again become upright—conquered outwardly at the cost of being conquered inwardly—in such a world the terrible question must arise whether the religion of Reason is destined to survive its near success, or whether it will decline under the weight of popularity, lower its tone, and shade its light to accommodate or conciliate the world.

The old Nemesis is pursuing us. There never was a period when such a vast mass of social and intellectual power lay hovering between the old faith and the new, destined to offer itself to that form of the

new which it shall find easier, most accommodating to its transitional condition. We see this in the extent to which superstition and folly riot over the sects. What means all this revival of puerile ages, old legends, pilgrimages; this lighting up of the old candle-ends of bygone faiths to burn on Protestant altars; the resuscitation of ghosts and goblins? The superficial cry is that the old faith is returning. The plain fact is that intelligence is leaving the old faith; scholarship is ebbing away from the old forms, and leaving the ignorant to have it all their own way. The apparent retrogression is only the thick shadow cast by the increased light of our age. And this emancipated intelligence; where is it? For the time recovering itself. Enjoying its new liberty with science, literature, art. But this cannot always be. The old problems will continue to press on heart and brain after the old solutions are exploded. The deep heart of man will still long for the great revival. And when that period—already coming—has fully arrived; when the freest religion has drawn all great hearts to it, then will flock to the standard hearts not great—the swarm of self-seekers, who will enter only to betray, and seek to drag down the pure standard to their own level of ignorance or ambition.

This danger we can meet only by a perpetual, absolute consecration to truth.

We must leave no vestige of superstition, admit no

faintest notion that anything can be held sacred but what is true; no book, no form, no name.

They are already sending around the warning. Be sure to call yourselves Christians! Believe what you please, deny what you please, but hold on to the Christian name.

I believe that the life or death of the present liberal organizations will depend on their ability to surrender that last idol—that Christian name to which they have no honest right, and which represents a lowering of the whole aim which gave us life, and by which we must stand or fall.

INDEPENDENT RELIGIOUS REFORMERS.

One Sunday I awoke from my customary afternoon nap, and found myself free from the evening service. A new curate was, I believe, to be trotted out, or something of the kind. I was much too delighted at emancipation from the delivery of my accustomed "Lecture" to inquire critically into the cause of my freedom. No sooner had I got my rare holiday than, like a boy with a "tip," I began to cast about how I should spend it. So little had I calculated on freedom that I had omitted to get the Saturday evening papers, and run my eye down the dainty bills of fare comprised under the head of "London Churches To-morrow;" so that, as the evening lamps were lighted, I found myself a waif and stray on the ocean of metropolitan ecclesiastical existence. The world was all before me where to choose my place of rest; for rest it is for a parson to be preached at occasionally. Not only so, but if he will simply vary his pulpit experiences judiciously, he will get a good many of the angles rubbed off his own idiosyncrasies by such a process. Having, not of course exhausted, but "stumped" to a pretty considerable extent the hemispheres of London, orthodox and unorthodox, I pro-

jected a wider area still—the great unexplored wilderness of Heterodoxy. I would reconnoitre those regions which did not even arrogate to themselves the title of Orthodoxy. Conscious though I was that many of the bodies I was forced by my artificial nomenclature to include under Orthodoxy were virtually heretical—for I had classed all as orthodox that even claimed communion with the Church of England as by law established—and equally well aware that many, if not all, of the outlying bodies claimed Orthodoxy as their common or exclusive right, I would, for the nonce, have none of these. I would seek the great ecclesiastically unwashed, the Pariahs of the religious caste-system, who would look upon the imputation of Orthodoxy as a personal insult. I knew little of them, and I fancy the world at large knows less—the vast desert region of Infidel and Atheistical London, largely allied with Republican London, and all as unknown to Orthodoxy, or so-called Unorthodoxy, for the matter of that, as Ashantees and Fantees were to civilization until circumstances brought the white man into their unlikely localities.

They were unlikely localities, too, in which I found the people I was in search of "most did congregate." As I ran my eye down a column of the *National Reformer*, in which I had some time before invested, for the purpose of making such an expedition, I found that the "Guide to the Clubs" therein contained would lead me very far astray indeed. There was

little time to spare, so I bethought me of the Society of Independent Religious Reformers in Newman Street, at which I had casually glanced on a former occasion, and the apostle whereof was the somewhat celebrated Dr. Perfitt. Out into the fog of an unseasonable January evening I plunged, making that my destination.

The Hall where the Independent Religious Reformers gather, situated at No. 14, Newman Street, Oxford Street, is, unless I greatly err, the same as that occupied by the followers of Edward Irving before they migrated to the more ambitious "Catholic Apostolic Church" in Gordon Square. Thither—how many years ago I dread to think—I used to be dragged, an unwilling juvenile, at very small hours for the "Morning Sacrifice," by two spinster aunts who had joined that persuasion, and again at five o'clock P.M. for the evening sacrifice. It was a veritable "sacrifice" on my part then, and I hope rather balanced some of my schoolboy peccadilloes, in the shape of furtive cigars and tortured cats. I have a confused recollection of unknown tongues, prophetic utterances, and such like, which were very much beyond my youthful comprehension then, and I fancy beyond my aunts' too, for they soon seceded, to my intense delight. All this came back to me, as the memory of boyhood's corduroys and escapades *does* come when one stumbles unexpectedly on a reminiscence of—I again decline to say how many years back. But the Hall was strangely metamor-

phosed since those early days. All the elaborate devotional paraphernalia of Irvingites were gone, and in place of them a rather wicked-looking proscenium fronted the deep stage at the farther end. In the spandrel of the arch were washy portraits of Shakspeare and Milton, that required as much gazing at as the photograph of a friend before one could identify them. Above was a temporary motto, in somewhat faint characters too, but appropriate to the occasion; and I feel sure the work of fairy fingers among the Independent Religious Reformers, the words being "A Happy New Year to You." At the rear of the stage was an organ with gilded pipes; but in front of it, as though to protest against any idea of being ecclesiastical, a grand pianoforte. Right and left was a choir of eight persons arranged à la Spurgeon, the ladies on one side and the gentlemen on the other; and Dr. Perfitt's rostrum was right in front, over where you would expect the footlights, with two splay gas-burners fronting the desk, on which stood what looked like a large Bible, and behind it Dr. Perfitt *in propriâ personâ*. He was a hale, scholarly-looking man, with long white philosophic beard, and unkempt grey locks streaming over his coat collar. He was habited in simple evening dress, and "orating" as I entered; for it was after seven o'clock when I got there.

There was a small congregation, or auditory, as we choose to term it, arranged in three grades of seats,

for which a charge of one shilling, sixpence, and threepence respectively was made. The gallery was pretty full, but the body of the Hall, consisting of the higher-priced places, only partially filled during the entire evening. The very large majority consisted of men, though there was a fair sprinkling of women. The former seemed mostly of the upper middle class, and the latter bore no outward or visible signs of strong-mindedness—at least not such as my uninitiated eye could discover. There was a marked absence of poor people, but the charge for admission might account for that. The morning lecture, which is more strictly confined to religious matters, is free. The evening's bill of fare consists of a "Topic"—generally, I believe, some political utterance or social subject that has cropped up during the week, and a lecture, each lasting about an hour, and interspersed with choral music, and organ performances by Mr. Field.

I felt that my visit was indeed well-timed, for Dr. Perfitt had just commenced a discourse on the "Topic" of Mr. John Bright's letter to a Nonconformist student *in re* Public Speaking, and the comparative advantages of written and extempore sermons. I could scarcely have wished for a more distinctive subject.

Dr. Perfitt had just disposed summarily of written treatises on rhetoric, and was quoting a remark made to himself by Lord Brougham on Whately's

"Rhetoric," which consisted of a strong recommendation never to look at it, as it was utterly useless. This sounded heterodox enough at the very outset to an old University man who had built much of his academic fame on the "Humanities;" but I did not come to Newman Street to have my private prejudices bolstered up. I was *pro tem.* an Independent Religious Reformer like the rest.

Young men, he continued, often came to him for advice as to making their début as public lecturers; and he always reminded them that people had special vocations, some to make shoes, others to make watches, others to go to sea, and so on; and it was no use to try to fit the round peg into the square hole, or *vice versâ*. One boy, for instance, was to be a parson. Possibly—he remarked in a satirical parenthesis—he was the biggest fool in the family, or there was a family living for him to step into. Another would have a large income, and he of course must be a statesman and go into Parliament. What would he do when he got there? The large proportion who went, irrespective of their vocation, never spoke at all—fortunately—or if they went with a written speech learnt off by rote, found that some one else had "stolen their thunder" before them. The difficulty was to find out the special aptitude of a youth.

To succeed in public speaking it was necessary first to feel intensely; and he recommended aspirants to form a class and read a play of Shakspeare, taking the

characters *seriatim*, as they came to each in turn, and not all trying to be Hamlets or Macbeths. They would soon find out if they had a special aptitude in this line. He contrasted quaintly, but appositely enough, the sing-song reading of the passage "To be, or not to be?" &c., with the delivery of one who felt the philosophic "situation" of that speech. A professional elocutionist ignored feeling, and "made people all arms and legs." The natural man did not declaim in this artificial way. He needed no elocutionist. His voice would of itself assume the proper tone, accordingly as he was reading a description of Cromwell charging at Marston or Naseby, and the same Cromwell standing by the deathbed of his mother.

Then, again, one must be full of a subject. In books there might be what he would call lath and plaster and padding, but not in speeches. You must see the man before you whom you wanted to describe.

With reference to sermons, Mr. Bright had not committed himself much: but he thought if preachers did not write, most of them would be worse than they were at present. There was—said Dr. Perfitt—an unreality about sermons. A preacher talked about election and universal depravity, but he added "he doesn't believe it. Look here, you Reverend Jeremy Timkins" (apostrophizing thus an ideal "parson"), "you make us out quite different people inside the Church, and outside, when we are dead and buried;

but we ain't. You make us out all devils inside, and all angels outside. Read the tombstones and contrast the epitaphs with the denunciations of the sermons inside, and you will soon see the difference." Then, again, he said—rambling somewhat from his subject in pursuit of the ideal Timkins—some parsons "dressed up." They said that they must do so to influence vulgar people. "Not a bit of it"—this was a constantly recurring phrase—"not a bit of it. You can elevate the masses without vulgarity. Is Shakspeare vulgar? And yet the gallery understands him quite as well as the stalls." This was a somewhat novel aspect of Ritualism, at all events!

The majority of minds were not logical. Witness the opposite conclusions arrived at by outsiders on the current Tichborne case. Go into a school, and you would see the same unreasoning treatment of boys. A lad would be fagging at Euclid when his mission was the fiddle. Walter Scott himself was considered the biggest fool in his school.

So it came that when pitchforked into livings, one parson bought his sermons; another "larded" them with texts and "dear brethrens." The preacher was commissioned to cheer the hearts and elevate the minds of his congregation. How could a young man, who knew nothing of the battle of life, do this in the case of some grey-haired old man and woman among his listeners? He had never felt cold or hungry; he had never bent him over some beloved dead. He

"instructed" them by talking of personal election and spiritual regeneration, or flinging justification by faith alone at their poor heads; so that all the comment Hodge made to Betty at the close of the sermon was, "Thank God, Betty, it's one o'clock." What a contrast was there in this respect between sermons and books of science. These led one on; and the time would come, he predicted, when parsons would say, "Jesus Christ did not read his sermon on the Mount," and would feel that five words spoken from the heart were better than a thousand "smelling of the oil."

This was something to the point, at all events for a listening "parson" who had preached two sermons to his congregation that very Sunday! Whether we like the doctrine or not, it was beyond doubt that there was some sound common sense in this expansion of Mr. Bright's oracular letter.

Between the "Topic" and the Lecture, Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer" was sung by the choir, who formed in a single line a little up stage behind the lecturer's desk. The solo part was taken in excellent style by Miss Fanny Perfitt, the daughter of the doctor, and the whole performance was much above par.

After this Dr. Perfitt commenced the second of a course of lectures on "Greece: its Religion and Heroes," the special subject for the evening being "The Mythology of Greece, its Origin and Meaning."

It had been the fashion at one time, he observed, to depreciate the heathen gods. Paul, it was said, settled all that on Areopagus, when he taught that God was a spirit ; but no one had yet defined what a spirit was. How could people believe in the Greek gods? it was asked. Well, it was not so long since we in England believed in ghosts; there might even be some who believed still. Farther back, they believed in broomstick witches, and farther still in giants. Then we came to belief in groups or masses of people like Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. In Spain and Italy such belief prevailed up to the date of "Don Quixote" being written. Similar matter was found in the lives of the Saints. But still it was urged people could not have believed in the gods of Olympus. To refute this he told the story of St. Peter's appearing to the Westminster fisherman, and promising him the right to all the fish in the Thames. This was quoted as a fact in the Charters of Egbert and Edward the Confessor; and not only so, but as recently as 1468 the rector of Rotherhithe wanted a tithe of fish, and commenced an action in the Court of Queen's Bench, when this original grant of St. Peter was actually put in as a plea. Such too was the story of the difference in weight between a live and dead fish, and in the number of ribs possessed by a woman and a man. There need be no difficulties, then, as to belief in the Greek gods. It was an uncritical age, and different bloods, such as the Indian, Egyptian, and

Persian had to be fused together in that small country. There was a tendency in the childlike mind to believe everything animated. The little girl thoroughly believed that her doll would feel cold and be hurt. Grant that idea to the Greek and you would understand how the ocean was a god, and the zephyr a god, and how Æolus (Dr. Perfitt shocked academical ears by calling him Æōlus) was related to Eros and Nyx. The Greeks were essentially religious. Everything to the Greek was a god. Here followed an elaborate disquisition on the Twelve Greater Gods and the older and more philosophic gods, and I was surprised to find Dr. Perfitt, thoroughly posted up though he was in his subject, adopting the Romanized names, such as Jove and Mercury, instead of Zeus and Hermes. There sat his audience, however, eagerly listening to the fairy tales which he told with remarkable ease and fluency, often soaring into the truest eloquence, and whenever he thought his listeners wanted enlivening, throwing in a dash of racy humour. Scoff as we might, he said, the Greek went close to the heart of nature, and was in the truest sense devotional. There were two full hours of talk, mind, with only short intervals of singing, and all done by one man in a dress coat, without book or note, or any meretricious adjunct to aid him. There could be no doubt he was full of his subject, and that his people were thoroughly sympathetic.

As I passed out I found Dr. Perfitt had "spotted"

me, and was waiting for a few cheery words of chat, though he was muffled up to the eyes and hastening home to nurse a bad cold, which must have made his long discourse very trying to him.

Outside the Hall they were selling that which a timid journal called "the most alarming sheet ever published"—*The Republican Herald.* It is certainly somewhat plain and outspoken, as we may gather from the following which is extracted *verbatim* or rather *literatim* :—

"NOTICE EXTRAORDINARY.

"JOHN BULL AND CO., Plaintiffs.

Victoria.

Action for Breach of Contract—Damages One Million.

"A full report of this Remarkable Trial, about to take place in one of the Superior Courts, will be given in the *Herald.*"

The quarterly list of lectures also embraced the following summary of the objects of the Society of Independent Religious Reformers :—

"First,—To secure the association of such persons as are desirous of cultivating the religious sentiment in a manner which shall be free from the evil spirit of creed, the intolerance of sectarianism, and the leaven of priestcraft; and of such persons as respect the authority of reason, and who reverently accept the decrees of conscience.

"Second,—To discover and methodize truths con-

nected with either the Laws of Nature, the Progress of Thought, or the lives of good men of all ages and countries, so that they may be rendered of practical value as guides to a healthful moral and manly life.

"Third,—To assist, as a religious duty, in the regeneration of Society, by co-operating with every organized body whose aim is to abolish superstition, ignorance, intemperance, political injustice, or any other of the numerous evils which now afflict society.

"The Society proposes to attain its objects by means of co-operating to promote the public delivery of lectures bearing upon science, history, and religious free thought; by means of schools in which the young shall be educated to love God and goodness, to know the inestimable value of truth and freedom, and to fear nothing but vice, serfdom, and dishonour; by means of classes for adults, and by means of publications in the form of journals, essays, and volumes.

"Rules.

"1. That this Society be composed of persons, male and female, who, without signing any creed or articles, shall declare themselves anxious to co-operate for the above-named purposes.

"2. That the business of the Society, or any branch of it, shall be conducted by a president, assisted by a committee of fifteen members, to be elected annually.

"3. That the terms of membership shall be by annual subscriptions of not less than £1, payable quarterly;

and that the committee take such steps as it may deem advisable for collecting over-due subscriptions.

"4. That the committee shall meet every month for the transaction of business, when minutes of the proceedings shall be taken, and, if necessary, reports prepared for the general meeting.

"5. That all questions involving the organization or extension of the Society shall be decided upon at a general meeting of the members, notice of which will be publicly given.

"6. That all persons who have paid quarterly instalments of their annual subscriptions shall be entitled to a vote at such meetings."

A PARSON IN TRANSITION.

An interesting event, illustrative of the extent to which Theism is spreading in the churches, occurred in the delivery of a sermon at Mr. Conway's Chapel, by the Rev. H. F. Revell, of Chertsey, an Independent clergyman, who chose that particular method of announcing his transitional condition. The defection and development of an individual, however able—and Mr. Revell *is* an able man—would be of little importance were not such process to be regarded as a sign of the times; but, as Mr. Conway observed on the previous Sunday, there can be no doubt that Free Thought is leavening many, even of the unlikeliest, religious bodies. In the absence of Mr. Conway, then, who was starring it in the country somewhere, Mr. Revell occupied the platform—we must not say the pulpit—at South Place. The service was much the same as on ordinary occasions, but the congregation decidedly smaller, for people come to South Place now to hear Mr. Conway, just as in former days they came to hear Mr. Fox. I think the singing, however, was even better than on the former occasion, Miss Marie Duval singing the solo soprano part of the anthem very sweetly indeed. This de-

velopment, in the musical arrangements of a Theistic service, is very remarkable; as is also the care displayed in the general adornments of the chapel. If doctrinal Theism is levelling upwards into the churches, Ritualism would seem to have its revenge by levelling downwards into the Theistic societies.

The anthem was Lowell's beautiful poem, commencing, "God is not dumb," and one of the hymns was so striking as to demand quotation:—

Dark the faith of days of yore,
And at evening evermore
Did the chanters, sad and saintly,
Yellow tapers burning faintly,
Doleful masses chant to Thee,
Miserere Domine!

Bright the faith of coming days,
And when dawn the kindling rays
Of heaven's golden lamp ascending,
Happy hearts and voices blending,
Joyful anthems chant to Thee,
Te laudamus, Domine!

Night's sad cadence dies away
On the yellow moonlight sea;
The boatmen rest their oars and say,
Miserere Domine!

Morn's glad chorus swells alway,
On the azure sunlight sea;
The boatmen ply their oars and say,
Te laudamus Domine!
(Altered from COLERIDGE.)

The only variety that Mr. Revell made in the service was the elimination, not only of prayer, but of the "meditation" with which Mr. Conway has replaced that disused element. Instead of this, Mr.

Revell read portions of the 17th and 18th chapters of St. John's Gospel. He had previously read, as his special lesson, parts of Mr. Conway's "Sacred Anthology." He was a scholarly-looking man, of slightly American aspect, with thin face, and what is commonly called a small "goat's" beard. There was no trace of Americanism, however, in his accent. His delivery was forcible, warming at times into real eloquence, but marked throughout—as the nature of his subject seemed to demand—by a vein of strong irony. He was dressed in a long great-coat during the service, of which he divested himself before commencing his address, like an athlete stripping for the arena. Then, without text or introduction of any kind, he announced his subject,—"Speaking with Authority."

The first kind of speaking, he said, that is suggested by the heading, of which there is a very great abundance, and for which authority of a very high order is claimed, is preaching.

Now, on your hearing preaching mentioned, I can quite understand the feeling should be, that it is quite unnecessary to say anything more about so well-worn and tiresome a matter.

To some people it would doubtless be a relief if a clean sweep were made of the whole thing itself, and of all writing and talking about it. Preachers should be persuaded to submit themselves to the process of Euthanasia, a process by which the world is to be rid of a great many troublesome, and weary, and sick

people. And no doubt, as preachers are supposed to be ready, and ought to be ready, to sacrifice themselves for the well-being and comfort of men, they might, if it could be brought home to them that they are very troublesome people, allow themselves to be persuaded by the advocates of Euthanasia, to offer themselves to be operated on, and so quietly and mercifully be put out of the way. Or, if there seems no prospect of this coming to pass just at present, perhaps the next best thing will be, for literature of the better sort utterly to ignore both preachers and preaching.

Most certainly preaching ought not to have the vigorous vitality it seems to have in it to keep itself going, when so many wish it would die out. We often hear that its power is declining, that it has, in fact, hardly any power at all left; and then hopes are again raised that it is going to "get on with its deeing."*

But it revives again, and refuses to die—in short, it is very troublesome. It ought to have allowed itself to be jostled out of the way; but so far from this having come to pass, it holds fast to its place and its work, and seems likely to last on for many days to come.

It would seem then to be our duty, both by speaking and writing, to do what we can to make it as

* The reference is to an anecdote of an old Scotchman in the *Fortnightly* article on "Euthanasia."

tolerable and useful as may be. If it can be brought to contribute to a broader and more generous spiritual life among men, it may again establish its claim to the sympathy of all those who are interested in the spiritual growth of the people.

The pulpit, as it exists among us to-day, may be briefly described as the Institution of the Church for spreading abroad a knowledge of certain Biblical truths, and providing, at the same time, for the varied expression of such truths through the individual utterances of many men. Thus the teaching of one great subject (which branches out into many minor ones) is secured, together with variety of treatment, within certain limits.

The Church requires that her servants accept her definitions and interpretations of Scripture teaching, and preach in harmony therewith. Her position is—"Thus and thus, saith the Scripture; thus and thus you, my servants, must believe and preach unto the people, that they also may thus and thus believe."

Now it will be conceded that it is an allowable and useful thing to do, to preach Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and Paul, and John, and Christ, inasmuch as they have left so much that is available for promoting the spiritual progress of men.

If some men may teach Plato, others may teach Paul and Christ. The Church, for example, has as much reason on its side (to say the least) for diffusing a knowledge of the contents of the Bible as the Early English Societies have for their laudable endeavour to

make Englishmen of to-day acquainted with the earlier treasures of English Literature.

But our Church demands that the Scriptures shall be made known and be believed, because they come to men invested with Divine authority of a specific sort. "You must," says the Church, "preach and believe Isaiah, and David, and Paul, because their writings have the seal of Divine authority stamped upon them as no other writings have." That is to say, you may teach Plato for what he is worth, but you must not teach Paul for what he is worth. There are grand old truths in Sophocles as there are grand old truths in Moses; but the authority which clothes the words of Sophocles is only human, while that which clothes the words of Moses is Divine. Some of the truths look pretty much alike, but that does not matter: there *is* a vast difference between them in point of authority.

The Church must take her stand somewhere, and takes it here on the faith once for all "delivered to the saints." The truth that is to be preached and believed may be decided by Scripture texts.

Whether the Church of to-day, with the history of the development of religious ideas during preceding ages, and up to this time lying open before her eyes, ought to demand of her servants that they shape their beliefs according to the old patterns, is a question which she herself has shelved from time to time. It is inconvenient to entertain such a question, and

so she passes it by. Christianity, she would fain persuade herself, is bound up with the maintenance of her present position. Not only Christianity, but social order, and the everlasting salvation of myriads are bound up with it.

But others have examined the question of Church authority as at present claimed, and decided most positively against it. Her organization admits of but a very poor expression of the religious thought, belief, and feeling of the nation. The expression that it allows and sanctions errs by excess and defect also. It includes what it should exclude, and excludes what it should include. It gives preference to tradition rather than truth, to time-honoured forms rather than sincerity: seems stunted, and unable to adapt itself sufficiently to its fresh surroundings.

If the authority the Church claims were organic in the sense that the authority of the parent over the little child is organic, one might be ready to concede somewhat. But it is not so; the relation is for the most part an artificial one.

If the authority claimed were an authority based on superior competency, men capable of judging would allow it. The claim is not based on competency. The only legitimate authority for calling upon men to preach certain truths, and upon others to accept them, is an authority based upon legitimate methods of research, discovery, and verification.

The Church has not so reached the truths she

publishes abroad. Many of them, indeed, are beyond, for the present at least, the reach of any known legitimate methods of discovery and proof.

This is seen by many outsiders, and hence the authority of the Church is disallowed. Worse than all, it is practically disallowed even by many of her own sons. The *Spectator*, when commenting on Mr. Voysey's defence, said, "there are very many of the Church of England who would not find difficulties in accepting every sentence in the articles in the plain and straightforward meaning of common life, and those few are far from our best." Notwithstanding this indisputable fact she still lays her commands upon her ministers to preach the doctrines prescribed, and contradict nothing set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles. I suppose that because she finds it written in the "Acts of the Apostles"—"The times of this ignorance God winked at," she fancies she may take shelter under such august authority, and innocently wink at a good deal of the naughtiness of her children. Only it will not do to have it thought that she is given to winking; so she now and then makes a stir, and flogs or expels a naughty boy, and then quietly takes to her winking again.

This, then, is the state of things in a Church professing to speak with authority derived from God and Christ. What shall we say respecting it? What shall we do? Shall we say nothing?—and do nothing?

As far as we ourselves are concerned, no doubt our own minds were made up long ago what we should think and what we should do. But this is a matter which so closely touches the spiritual life of our people, that we cannot look on as unconcerned spectators. These churchmen are our countrymen and brothers.

No doubt, after a fashion, the Church believes that she is invested with Divine authority, and believes, also, that it is best for the people's sake to come to them proclaiming a message which is sanctioned by Divine authority. But it is too late in the day to make such a claim as this; a claim as pretentious and invalid as claim can be. This she knows to be the case, in part at least; or, if not, might know. She claims to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," and is mainly the teacher and upholder of theological science, falsely so called. Many of her facts are not facts at all; many of her premises are baseless assumptions; while some of the truths and facts from which she starts are made, by a perverse logic, to yield conclusions which, the moment they are understood, must be instantly rejected.

The Church should have an intellectual conscience, as well as a creed. The legal obligation is not for her the full measure of the moral obligation. Just as a man who professes to proclaim the truth, is bound to see that that which he preaches is the truth as far as he can find it, so also is the Church bound to search for

and declare the truth. The Church has a duty to perform over and above that of seeing that her servants render compliance with Church regulations. There is no sufficient sanction to warrant a Church in demanding, nor a man in giving, a promise to supply such preaching as is against knowledge, ascertained fact, and Christian morality; neither personal conveniences nor Biblical theories, nor Church exigences, ought to be allowed to interfere more than can be helped with truth and honesty.

Creeds, articles, prayers, remain the same to-day as they were three centuries ago. The Church does not acknowledge progress or change in religious thinking and believing. The standards of the Church furnish no indication, contain no record, of alteration having taken place. The change ought to be recognised.

Why of all records of thought and belief those which should most nearly correspond therewith should be farthest from doing so, it is hard, indeed, to say. Grant that a Church cannot conveniently be for ever reconsidering her creeds, still, looking at the fact that the results of Biblical criticism, scientific discoveries, and the intellectual and spiritual perceptions of the time tell strongly against some other fundamental positions, she cannot, without forswearing her claim to be the pillar and ground of the truth, refuse to change what needs to be changed, or wipe out what can no longer be justified.

But as yet we see no sign that this will be done.

She is still in the old place, and in the old chair on the shore, bidding the tide flow in no further. But still the tide comes in. To on-lookers it is plain that she must move back, or that she will be swept away. Is it too good a thing to hope that she will move back, or as some might prefer to put it, not move back, and so acknowledge that the tide is coming in.

Certainly she will not avert her fate, if she remain where she is, by quoting, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against me." She is in a false position, and cannot remain there. She must be true to knowledge, to her conscience, and to righteousness. This is her primary duty. She must confess her mistakes, as well as sit to receive confession of other peoples'. The people have no claim upon her for what is not true, though they may have been so educated that their religious tastes are corrupt. Let her say boldly, "I will serve the people as far as in me lies, only it must not be at the expense of truth, conscientious conviction, and verifiable knowledge, or in defiance of ripest spiritual culture and intelligence." Then, but not till then, will she be listened to as one speaking with authority, because having had—

> "Meted out to her,
> So much of judging faculty, no more;
> She has been found not slack in use thereof."

But hitherto she has been slack in use of judging faculties.

But some of her sons, although she tries to keep a

tight hand on them, and has confined them in a very small close room, have broken away from her, and managed to take a peep out of the window. Once, perhaps, they fancied that the creed or church window was large enough to let in all the light that was ever likely to come from God to men, and that the little bit of earth and sky they caught sight of through it was the whole of the glorious world outside that mortals ought to see. But when they came to put their heads out of the window, and look around and above, they saw, as it were, a new heaven and a new earth. And it is not possible, or ought not to be possible, for such men to go on any longer talking about heaven and earth, as if that little bit they used to see through the window were all that was to be seen. And why should they? Why should their report of what they have seen be made into a caricature to suit the Church view of matters? If such a man go into the world as the Church would have him go he finds himself as in a strange land, when he ought to feel more at home. If he would see aright and judge aright he must throw away the eyeglasses the Church has supplied him with, and he would see things as they are, and speak of them as he finds them.

I do not see how any sincere, earnest, honest, truth-loving man can hold his peace. He will be eager to tell what he sees and hears, nor will he use misleading words. No doubt the ear hears what it brings with it of the power of hearing, but the duller the ear the

greater the need of plain speech. To make himself understood he will state the truth boldly and nakedly, avoiding all trimming and mincing of words.

Fearfulness leads to confusion of speech, and, conscious of having reached by legitimate methods what he has to deliver, he will speak courageously and honestly; and who shall dare to make him afraid? His Church, forsooth? She may have power to silence him; but of moral, legitimate authority not a jot or tittle. I do not plead for the flippant speech of the man who delights to shock popular beliefs or set at naught an authority to which he subjected himself; but for the thoughtful, tender, reverent, truthful, and courageous utterance of the man whose teaching shall be according to knowledge, truth, and fact, and according also to strictest morality. The demand, "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience," is not necessarily legitimate or to be granted as it stands. Before I can fairly make such a demand I must have a conscience to know, to utter, and to argue according to truth, according to verified fact, according to legitimate methods of research and proof, and according to righteousness. Then, but not till then, can I legitimately demand the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience.

When the demand is so made no Church can legitimately resist it, without repudiating its own claim to be the pillar and ground of the truth, although perhaps

to grant it would be to imperil its own existence in the form in which we find it to-day.

But there is no need whatever that speaking with authority should be thought or spoken of only in connexion with the Church and her preachers. Those who acknowledge no existing Churches, and are outside all Churches, may speak without authority, and with authority. It is too much to affirm that all such speaking is with authority; that all the "free-thinking and plain speaking" of the day can be legitimately defended.

In the eyes, perhaps, of the great majority of people it is not to be doubted that it is regarded as being without authority, and also as deserving of censure from the divinely constituted ecclesiastical authorities of the day.

We must not be misled into thinking that the whole fabric of Church authority is soon to fall. A very large majority of religious or church-going people honestly, though blindly, acknowledge it. Thousands will continue to pay it at least feigned submission—thousands more cling to it as their only refuge from despair or scepticism. There are those also who will acknowledge it in the presence of the multitude, that the multitude may be kept in subjection to it. By many busy men theologians will still continue to be regarded as experts in theological and religious matters, pretty much in the same way as the members of the other professions are regarded as experts in

their own special line ; and I think many individuals who are disposed to break with religious and ecclesiastical authority, or who may already have done so, would unite to acknowledge it in the presence of a common foe.

It is also seen that we cannot start afresh and begin at the beginning, and that the Divine Right theory has in days gone by simplified matters wonderfully, and made government possible, when otherwise it would have been impossible, and that in so doing it secured a start and some progress. Some few among us seem to think that it has work to do yet. Here and there we discern a hankering after a sort of despotic form of government. Mr. Stephen's book on "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" is in some respects a sign of the times. The *Pall Mall Gazette,* too, often manifests the similar craving after governmental exhibitions of brute force.

The advocates of liberty, of free-thinking, and plain speaking are not blind to all these things. The claim they make is of the sort I spoke of a little while ago, not simply the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, but the claim to do so only where there is the conscience to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to truth, according to legitimate methods of research and proof, according to verified fact, and according to righteousness, otherwise the claim is not valid, and they cannot speak with authority.

We are breaking with the authority of the Churches because they cannot justify their authority, while at the same time we are assigning authority to science because of its method and results. We are trusting our men of science because we trust their method of research and verification.

Human judgment is no doubt fallible all round, since some things are true and some things are false—while some are unknown, though perhaps to be known in the future; while possibly some are not only unknown, but unknowable. It is plain, therefore, that some of these properly fall within the scope of legitimate teaching, and that some are beyond it.

Truth is of "no private interpretation," and knows no favourites—is within the reach of all competent men. If you, being competent, can find it, I, being competent, can find it also. It belongs to neither Church, nor nation, nor class—past or present.

The orthodox tells us that there is only one way of salvation for all. However that may be, it is undeniable that there is only one way of truth for all—whether orthodox or heterodox. To find it and walk therein, it is not enough for any man simply to break with ancient authority. Old fetters may be exchanged for new, but they are none the less fetters because new.

The way of truth is the way of scientific research and verification. It is of the utmost importance that we recognise this fact. Not till this is done will the

chaos of modern thought be reduced to order. Not till then will there emerge into view an authority to confront and overthrow the authority to which men have so long submitted. Even though this method be incomplete, and therefore not final, it seems to me to be the one we must follow at present. We shall thus get rid of the necessity of going over the same ground time after time, to make sure of our results. True, we are to keep an open mind. But this method of science is the one to be followed: the only one that has authority for us to-day. In using it we may see our way to make it more complete, and render it competent to deal with facts which are not thought to come within its scope. For the present we may be in doubt whether it is applicable to all things whatsoever. Be it so: this is only another way of saying that there are some things respecting which we must for the present rest in doubt, and that some things must wait till they can be shown to be true. Self-evident facts are of course evidently true without further proof. Opinion differs greatly as to the number of these self-evident truths. Many at least are not self-evident. Take the grandest truth of all, "the being and all-perfectness of God." There is no direct consciousness of Him: no intuition. Father Dalgairns, in his paper on the question, "Is God unknowable?" which appeared in the *Contemporary* some little time ago, said that we experience God: experience Him in the pangs of sin. We

may deny Him, and lo! He stabs us for our wrong.

What we in reality experience is sorrow for sin. That God sends or causes the sorrow is an inference, and to be judged as such.

The test of the individual reason is not satisfactory as a test of objective truth. It is not in itself a perfectly safe guide in every case. Certainly it needs to see in what way it must go, if it would attain to truth. The being and all-perfectness of God would be allowed to be consonant with the highest human reason. Is that sufficient for going forth to announce it as an indisputable truth unto the world? It may be a more or less valid ground for hoping or believing that He is, and that He is all-perfect; but to proclaim it with authority, for doing that we have no sufficient warrant.

The same thing holds of many other rational things. Coleridge, as you know, undertook to show, in his "Aids to Reflection," that the Christian faith is the perfection of human intelligence. Dr. Newman, too, defends the Infallibility of the Church as the Interpreter of Scripture, on the ground of the reasonableness of God's appointing an Infallible Interpreter of His own Word. It has often seemed to me that this setting up of reason borders closely upon the old philosophical notion of *à priori* methods of truth. If not quite the same sort of thing, it borders closely upon it. To it are to be traced numberless errors, of all sorts.

The appeal must be to facts, of whatever order.

Pretty much the same thing is to be said of the doctrine of "the right of private judgment," as that which has been said of making our reason a test of truth. The correspondent of the *Inquirer*, in a late number of that paper, says that "Unitarianism" is a method of inquiry based upon the principle of "the right of private judgment." That which most disturbs our generation is not a question affecting "the right of private judgment" so much as a question respecting its validity. It is important to demand and obtain the liberty to act upon the right. But private judgment needs to be guided by general scientific method. The judgment must be exercised according to rules that lead to the discovery of truth. The right of private judgment has for its correlative the duty of finding rightly. If this duty be avoided speaking with authority is out of the question.

Claim the right if you please, but above all neglect not the duty. I was going to say that I would gladly give up the liberty of private judgment, if even by compulsion I could be made more readily to arrive at truth. Because it seems to me that truth is for so short a life as ours a better thing than freedom to judge as one pleases. And, after all, private judgment may lead us to very little, unless we happen to have a mind that will conduct us to truth. What we want to hear is a voice we can trust, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Nothing is more urgently needed than a common or universally applicable criterion of truth. It is certainly worth our while to try what the application to all subjects of thought and experience of the scientific method will yield us.

I do not imagine that the results will be perfectly satisfactory. But at least if the method be proved imperfect, we may from that very fact come to discern a better way.

Satisfaction, with results so obtained, is hardly possible; we should find ourselves craving for much beside,—perhaps legitimately craving for much beside. It is a wide world and a very complex, and that method that can deal with the whole of it perfectly must be wonderfully comprehensive and complete. The results we reach may be indisputable, but we yearn for many other things to be true also. Much will for a long time to come remain possible to spiritual feeling, that scientific methods will not allow or positively sanction. For example, though by such methods we cannot reach up unto God; though also, examination of certain facts seems to make against His existence and perfection; yet, in presence of all that is antagonistic, spiritual feeling affirms the possibility of His existence and perfection.

But of course we are forbidden to make the simply conceivable into the actual, just as we cannot legitimately raise the inconceivable into the objectively impossible.

Though then for the present we seem under the necessity of abiding by logical and scientific method, yet we may not forget that man is something more than a machine for making inferences. The logical faculty, or if you prefer it the intellect, is not the whole of man. When we have detached the intellect, as it were, for processes of its own, we must make the synthesis of the whole man again. The truth is that there is much in man beside intellect with which we hardly know how to deal yet. But to give intellect predominance over emotion, or intuition, may be legitimately objected to, quite as much as assigning to emotion preponderating authority. The logic of spiritual science waits to have done for it what has been accomplished for the logic of the inductive and deductive methods of investigation and discovery.

For example, is there no truth contained in the hymns of your hymn book but what scientific method can deal with satisfactorily just at present? And when our spirits enter into sympathy with the sentiments of many of the songs, are they dealing with fiction only, that is, with sentiments that have no corresponding realities outside the spirit of him who feels sympathy kindled within him?

We must beware while we follow scientific methods of stultifying our spiritual sympathies for the sake of what may turn out to be after all only an imperfect method. George Henry Lewes, in his last book, says

"The internecine war which has so long disturbed religion and obstructed science, will give place to a doctrine which will respect the claims of both and satisfy the needs of both. This future may be undetermined, but it will come. The ground will be contested inch by inch. The pathway of progress will still, as of old, bear traces of martyrdom; but the advance is inevitable. The signs of the advent are not few. Looking at them with closeness one observes that science itself is also in travail. Assuredly some new mighty birth is at hand. Solid as the ground appears, and fixed as are our present landmarks, we cannot but feel the strange tremors of subterranean agitation which must ere long be followed by upheavals disturbing the landmarks. ('Problems of Life and Mind,' p. 4.) The authority of the ancient creeds is gone: the authority of the new Doctrine is in process of foundation: to complete it scientific method must be followed, but followed in the conviction that it is but leading to the discovery of the more perfect way."

HUMANITARIANISM.

"WHAT!" I fancy I hear my readers exclaim, "yet another ism!" It was the fact of that additional ism, and the circumstance that I myself strongly hold the maxim, "Homo sum, nihil humanum a me alienum puto," which led me forth one Sunday morning to Penton Street, Islington, where, I had been informed, a Humanitarian Lecturer, one Mr. Povey, was to hold forth on the subject of Socrates, at the Claremont Hall. Pentonville Hill on a Sunday morning is greatly *sui generis*. Flocks of people pass and repass to the multitudinous churches and chapels of Islington, and early bakings monopolize the attention of many of those who do not worship. Besides such there is always a large number of folks everywhere on Sunday going, like Gehazi, "nowhither," and among these, in the exercise of my recent Christian liberty, I passed leisurely along smoking my cigar on the Sunday morning I had resolved to devote to Humanitarianism.

Punctuality, as I had already proved on a previous Sunday, when I went to hear Mr. Povey lecture on Spinoza, is not among the cardinal virtues of the Humanitarians. Long after eleven o'clock, when I

had in vain sought to pay my threepence at Claremont Hall, and found nobody to take it, I adjourned to a stationer's shop opposite, in full trade that Sunday morning, and under pretence of buying a threepenny notebook, asked the communicative proprietress about the Humanitarians. She knew very little, save that they were newcomers; and while I was talking to her a young man entered Claremont Hall with an air of authority. I flew at him and questioned him; but found he had only come to light the fire. Then a dejected boy took up his station, arranging and rearranging some large posters about the lecture, but it was full half-past eleven before the presiding genius, Mr. Kaspary, and the lecturer, Mr. Povey, put in an appearance. A bright-eyed little pianiste came a few minutes earlier; for, ecclesiastical prodigals as we were, there was to be "music," though not "dancing" for us.

There was not a symptom of an audience, either now or when the lecture commenced; at least there were only myself, the lecturer's daughter, Mr. Kaspary, and the dejected boy, who had a bad cough. The bright-eyed pianiste played a nice solo, and then the lecturer read the fifteen rules or doctrines of the Humanitarians, which are appended below. Then another solo, and the lecture commenced. The lecturer was an elderly scholarly-looking man, and I really regretted that he had no audience, as I did also that the young man who attended to the fire had not

been more successful in his department; for it went out at an early stage of the proceedings, and the cold was Arctic.

Man, said the lecturer, is all related, and every one is an actor of a principal or a subordinate part in the drama of the world: whichever part he plays he is so conjoined with his fellow players that his character cannot be understood without naming and explaining the *dramatis personæ* (actors of the play in which he has acted) :—

> "All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players,
> And one man in his time plays many parts."

When the scenes, too, are described, through which the chief comedian or tragedian has passed, we possess nearly all the means possible of remembering his history, of divining his motives, of seeing his errors, of witnessing his virtues, and deriving excitement to imitate his excellences, or warning to avoid his errors, his faults, or his crimes.

Sophroniscus, a sculptor, and Phœnarete, the midwife, were respectively the father and mother of Socrates, the hero of our discourse.

Crito was a wealthy noble whose service to Socrates was very important.

Euripides, the tragic author, was a most intimate friend of Socrates.

Aristophanes, the comic dramatist, had much to do with his portrait as it has descended to us.

Protagoras is a philosopher who prophesied the future eminence of Socrates.

Zopyrus, a physiognomist.

Plato, a disciple of Socrates.

Xenophon, historian of Greece and Persia, also a disciple.

Aspasia, a handsome, learned woman, professor, a general lover.

Phidias, the most eminent sculptor of Greece.

Alcibiades, a young nobleman and also a disciple of Socrates.

Anytus and Melitus, his accusers of crime.

Laches, a companion of Socrates in the wars.

Xantippe, wife of Socrates.

Connus and Damon, teachers of music.

Zeno of Elea, the philosopher.

Scopas of Cranon.

Eurylochus of Larissa, and Archelaus of Macedonia, Sovereign Princes.

Τὸ δαιμόνιον, the familiar spirit of Socrates.

The Pythia, a priestess of Apollo at Delos.

Grooms, farriers, slaves, salesmen in the Agora or market, cattle-drivers, &c.

Our first scene, though partly imaginary, must be necessarily true. In the humble home at Athens, with workshops attached, alternately lived the young Socrates, and received instructions in due time (in addition to that which was purely elementary) in the art of sculpture, by which it was intended he should

gain his living. He must have been a strange, eccentric boy, for we find that his father consulted the priestess of Apollo at Delphi as to what teachers he should procure for his son. The answer of the Oracle was that if he were left to his own bent he would teach himself. It would be better than a thousand masters.

The period in the history of Greece in which he flourished was from about 469 to 400 B.C., so that when Greece was resting he passed a long life within one year of the three score and ten to which so few arrive.

He was of a very inquisitive turn of mind, and, although he makes use of all means within his reach, yet he depends chiefly on himself for answers to the great problems that are suggested to his mind from time to time. We may suppose that he learnt the art of sculpture well, since for a time he had to earn his living by it, and there is a tradition that a fine group of the Graces was executed by him and publicly exhibited. But how was it that he had leisure to pursue study, and live the free and unconstrained life that he did?

Crito, the wealthy noble, stepped forward, and afforded him the means of living, and removed him from the workshop. He went about here and there in Athens, constantly inquiring, and by this means gained an immense deal of knowledge of men and things. Protagoras said that he would become great in philosophy.

Now, the period in which he flourished was one in which multitudes of self-styled philosophers existed, as well as real ones. In the world of poetry there were Sophocles and Aristophanes, and Phidias in sculpture.

Among the friends of Socrates was the poet Euripides, so noted for the moral sentences in all his plays, and which may have been suggested by Socrates, as the style of Socrates may have been poetized by Euripides. Fancy the two friends working together for one common end—the one to make men happier and better by mingling morality with fable, and the other by direct and plain instructions.

Now Euripides persuaded Socrates to study the writings of Heraclitus, who prided himself on his depth and obscurity.

> "Begone, ye blockheads, Heraclitus cries,
> And leave my labours to the learn'd and wise."

Euripides asked Socrates how he liked them. His answer is beautiful. "What I understand is excellent, and I have no doubt that what I don't understand is equally excellent." He learned dialectic or the art of disputation from Zeno of Elea, and some geometry from Theodorus of Cyrene. He made use of all knowledge for the purpose of illustrating the chief topic on which he spoke.

Prodicus was the fashionable teacher of rhetoric, and from him he is said to have had instruction.

Socrates was frequently at the house of Aspasia, the celebrated courtezan, beloved by Pericles and Plato, but also a teacher of eminence. He is also said to have studied music under Connus and Damon; he is also stated to have played on the lyre. His knowledge of music he used only, as many other parts of knowledge, for the illustration of his ideas.

"He now conversed with every man at his own home, submitted to be familiarly approached and reviewed without reserve, and instead of waiting to be consulted by his votaries only, volunteered to mingle in the business, interests, and pleasures of everyday life."

He declared himself a citizen of the world. The stranger, the mechanic, the slave was enlightened by his wisdom, improved by his advice, and consoled by his humanity.

According to Plato, he admitted the transmigration of the soul, that it had been possessed of unbounded knowledge in a pre-existing state, and that it would exist for ever hereafter.

The scene in which all these conversations took place was chiefly the Agora or market-place at Athens. Here he conversed and argued till he convinced the salesmen and the cattle-drivers that their own welfare was inextricably bound up in that of their country, and that to suffer an injury was nothing to stain the soul, but to inflict an injury was.

Socrates did not countenance war, but yet he served his country two or three times as a patriotic soldier. In the Chersonese, at Potidæa, while others were clothing themselves with additional garments, he was observed in his usual dress walking barefoot on the ice with more ease than others with their shoes. Socrates rescued his friend Alcibiades from death. Laertes, the historian, says that at the battle of Delium Socrates also saved Xenophon. Socrates escaped from Delium in company with Laches and Alcibiades, and thus saved his friends as well as himself by his sagacity.

On his return to Athens he continued his avocation as a "cross-questioner of men." His grand idea was to remove from the minds of the Sophists and their disciples the false impression they had of their own knowledge. With every one of this kind he so questioned and obtained admissions, that the questioned person ended by confessing that he knew nothing of that which at the beginning he professed to know everything.

He hereby created many enemies. He is at last accused by Melitus and Anytus, men in power, of corrupting the youth of Athens, and introducing other new deities.

The Apology of Socrates by Plato, is the work which gives us the best idea of Socrates in his grandest aspect, the preference of death to the violation of what he held to be right. He says to the judge, "Though

I love and reverence you, I shall obey God rather than you. If you kill me you will not hurt me so much as you will hurt yourselves. I compare the public to a great sleepy horse that wants a gadfly to stir it up. When I am gone it will go to sleep, till somewhat stir it up again. If we think death an evil we are in error, it is only the way to another life. No evil can happen to a good man in life or death."

You all know the story of his death. Socrates said that he had a familiar spirit that always prevented him from going anywhere or doing anything that would be hurtful. Plutarch wrote a treatise, "De Genio Socratis," Apuleius de Deo Socratis. Xenophon and others said that this spirit both enjoined and forbade things. The Greek is δαιμονιον (a little deity), not Θεὸς, a God, or Δαιμων, a demon or spirit. It always gave him counsel (γνωμη), and advised him chiefly in small matters. It gave him a sign (σημειον) in small things.

One of the writers on this has said that the Gods work on the principle of association in the mind, and that not to act without internal advice was so a habit that his quick exercise of judgment became a sense by practice. He taught by this deference to conscience that intellectual culture without moral practice is a wildfire, and that conscience is the voice of God. The grand lesson to be drawn from this is the power

of practice. By this perceptions become so vivid that they enlist the passions on their side, and overbear all the solicitations of external temptation.

Earnestness.

"Ernst ist das Leben," "Earnestness is life," says Schiller, and in this utterance he represents the character of the German nation, which is peculiarly distinguished by earnestness. What then is this earnestness which is said to be life? When a man is said to be in earnest, or earnestly bent on the doing of a thing, it is understood that he fully means it, and that if his design has been stated in words, that the statement is perfectly sincere.

The first element then at which we arrive by our analysis is the quality of sincerity. Now, to understand this we must contrast it with deceitfulness, of which it is the exact opposite. But why should any one practice deceitfulness, and avoid the practice of sincerity? clearly because he thinks that this course will promote his interest of some kind or other. Usually it will only promote his present momentary interest, such as the gratification of the love of gain, or even some lust, or appetite. Now, as the gratification of passion or appetite without the approbation of the higher faculties of the mind, reason, or conscience, does not promote a man's general, higher, or permanent interests, but only his lower, narrower, and transitory interest, his deceitfulness is a mistake, and

must be found to be an error. So that deceit and insincerity are errors, and the quality of sincerity, which is the opposite of this, is truth, and one of the true ways of promoting one's highest and ever-enduring interest. Deceit is soon discovered, and its perpetrator branded and avoided. There is a sinister look in the deceitful one's face, for nature is not slow to impress on the countenance outward marks of the quality of the mind or spirit that actuates the body. On the countenance of the sincere man or woman, on the contrary, equally indubitable marks of straightforwardness and directness of purpose are imprinted: the eyes look straightforward; in the deceitful the looks are askance and furtive. The sincere man or woman, by dint of always acting with an individual mind, acts with greater force because those doubts are absent which will suddenly beset the deceiver and weaken his resolution. If we analyse still farther the quality of earnestness we still find that an earnest man or woman always actually performs the action intended. How comes this to pass? By resolution, force, energy. So that you see this same earnestness of character is a very complex thing, consisting of many various elements harmoniously combined. For what is the will? And what is a strong will and a feeble will? How is strength of will produced? This is something like the process: Some object strikes the senses and creates a strong desire for possession. In the brute or brute-like man right and wrong are broken through, and

possession is gained, which is followed by all the evil consequences which such a course produces. But in a man governed by reason and conscience its approval by conscience is first sought, and then the force of reason, added to the animal force, makes the will almost irresistible. But strength of will is created in another way. Some position in life, or some lofty character, has come under the attention of the mind. The searching faculty has inquired into all the elements that make up this position or character; then the imagination catches up the mighty theme, combines all the elements into one grand picture, which acts on the senses with almost the force of sensible objects: strong desire is excited, and the will is concentrated on the possession of this one position or character, as it may be. Then the inventive power sets to work to lay out in order all the means by which it may be obtained, and also all the frowning difficulties, all the lions in the way, that may possibly oppose. Then the means are devised for the conquest even of them. The mind being forewarned is forearmed, and the practical powers march like some victorious Marlborough to continual victory. That earnestness, then, which is life, is composed of sincerity, as opposed to insincerity, and of concentrated, as opposed to scattered, powers of volition. The man first knows what he is going to do, and then he gathers up all his forces, and does it with all his might. There is one other element in the earnestness

which is life, and that is an attention to little things, especially the avoiding of small neglects. A rat-hole in a dyke in Holland, in time enlarged, may let in the water that shall devastate a tract of land. But small acts of neglect are never felt in their consequences till long after. So an earnest character is formed by exercising a strong will in small matters, and summoning up energy for that which is an apparent trifle, on which trifle so much may depend. No single action is much by itself, but repeated acts of the same kind form habits, and habits accumulated form character. Thus by knowledge, sincerity, energy, and repetition, or perseverance, is formed that earnestness which is life.

And now what remains but to see how we may apply this to the amelioration of our characters? The first thing is to be earnest in the pursuit of knowledge; yet true earnestness does not consist in accumulating knowledge without putting it to use, but in a quite contrary thing—in first gaining a little knowledge, then using it, then more knowledge, and so on till the end; even as the gradual taking of food creates digestive strength, which enables the body to profit more and more by that which is supplied. Besides, this is the true economy of knowledge. There is but one condition coupled with the gaining of knowledge, and that is its use. If a man practises what he knows, good—he shall gain more knowledge; if not, even what he has shall perish. The exercise of an organ of the

body is its stimulus to perfection, so the reducing of our knowledge is the way to attain wisdom.

Let us be earnest in the communication of knowledge, and that will require earnest practice of composition, both written and oral, without the possession of which our knowledge will not obtain a favourable entrance into the minds of those whom we wish to benefit. What was it rendered Socrates the wisest of the Greeks? It was this: he was ever in the pursuit of knowledge, ever in the communication of it, ever in the practice of it; and this combination is wisdom.

Let us be earnest in performing all the ordinary business of our lives, as well as that extra business which every one ought to undertake as a citizen of the world or member of the great family of humanity. Let us be earnest in everything we do, that we may feel the exquisite pleasure that arises from the heart-and-soul style of doing things and of taking pleasure. Let us be always pleased with what we are doing. When we are sincerely pleased we are nourished. If we walk or run, let it be in such a mode that a glow will pervade our whole frames from the circulated stream of life. If we think, let it be with the full force of our minds, and then we shall feel the life of the mind. Life alone avails not the having lived. We only feel our existence when we are in earnest action. "Virtus in actione sola consistit." When we love or hate (the latter only principles, not persons) let it be with earnestness. Thus in thought, and feel-

ing, and act, earnestness is life. Newton's earnestness was intellectual life, the benevolence of Jesus and Howard was emotional life, and the activity of Napoleon and Marlborough was physical life; but whoever combines the three, and is earnest in all things, will find the truth of Schiller's saying, "Earnestness is life."

I failed to gather much of the distinctive character of Humanitarianism either from the lecture itself or from the fifteen rules that preceded it. These were as follows:—

"Fifteen Doctrines of the Religion of God.

"1. The only God is eternal and indivisible.

"2. The human soul is eternal, both past and future.

"3. All finite parts of the unbounded universe are eternal.

"4. The earth is the only and eternal abode of the human soul.

"5. The soul feels neither pleasure nor pain without a body.

"6. Every infant has pre-existence, or is a person risen from the dead.

"7. Every person or human soul is immortal, or will be born again as an infant.

"8. The male and female sex have equal intellectual, moral, social, and political rights and duties, since men and women are alike responsible to God and humanity for their thoughts, desires, and actions.

"9. Sins are black spots in the human soul, but merits are the sparkling diamonds in her. The black spots in the soul can be washed away only by the water of repentance, and the purifier of direct or indirect restitution; but the sparkling diamonds can be implanted in the soul only by the instruments of wisdom and goodness.

"10. All persons are inevitably rewarded for their good thoughts, desires, and actions, but unavoidably punished for their evil ones.

"11. God does not interfere capriciously in the actions of mankind, but the human soul is capable of having the will and the power to desire and carry out possibilities. Human beings are, therefore, responsible to God and to their own race for their actions.

"12. God is the universal Providence, but mankind are their own special providence. To beg of God and to rely on His interference is severely punished by Him; but the knowledge and implicit faith that those who work, and perseveringly and gratefully employ the infinite and divine gifts that are in existence, will meet with success in due time, is richly rewarded by God.

"13. The government by the best and wisest, chosen by the majority of Humanitarians, and the co-operation of all healthy Humanitarians, constitute the only political form of government and social state advocated and sanctioned by the 'Religion of God.'

"14. All true science, philosophy, and morals are derived from God, and are the only true 'Religion of

God' which will be the real 'Saviour' of the whole human race; but all the present false religions are priestcraft, or falsehood mingled with truth, which have been, are, and will be the chief cause of all the misery with which mankind has been, is, and will be afflicted.

"15. Persons can only live happily after death by the use of the present life for the creation of good desires and great talents in themselves, and for the improvement of external circumstances, so as to make real heavens in themselves and a real paradise upon earth, which latter is the only true and eternal abode of all human souls belonging to this globe."

Nor if the articles failed me, did I gain much by falling back on the simple formulary—

"The Prayer of Humanitarians.

"All merciful God! in whom all beings are, accept our sincere thanks for Thy goodness. Thou hast given all to all, and we acknowledge that but for the ignorance, wickedness, and indifference of many erring brothers and sisters, all mankind would live in a real paradise.

"Accept our vows to love our own soul by enlightening her, to love our own body by living virtuously, so as to render our present life long and happy.

"We therefore vow to love each and all members of the human family as ourselves, by setting them a good example, by assisting them in their bodily

sufferings, and by enlightening their minds, so as to render them as happy as ourselves, since this alone is the true preparation for our own progressive bliss after death.

"To fulfil our vows we solemnly promise to God and to humanity to perform the twelve principal duties, and to keep the constitution of Humanitarians, and to try with all our might to promote the spread of the 'Religion of God.'"

I had a longish conversation with Mr. Kaspary, which I could have heard better if the energetic young pianiste had not played her pretty fantasias so *forte*, and found that really Humanitarianism was simply Pantheism with Transmigration very prominently in front. He quite assumed the seer, and said he had got to "know" the truth of what he taught. I mildly tried to substitute "strong conviction" or "reasonable presumption" for knowledge, but it was no use. "'Twas throwing words away," as the poet says of the pertinacious little girl; so with this thoroughly earnest German Jew. He had elaborated Humanitarianism, and not all the cold of the Claremont Hall or the neglect of the Pentonville people could keep him and his father-in-law (for such was the lecturer) quiet. To them I felt sure Schiller's words *did* apply: their earnestness *was* their life!

According to the pamphlet which my good friend gave me, the profession and practice of Humanitarian

principles would at once bring about something more than the Millennium. I confess I could not—and cannot—quite see how the recognition of metempsychosis could produce these most desirable effects; and I rather fancy I had heard the same idea promulgated with regard to one or two other religions into which it had been my lot to examine. But Humanitarianism was peculiarly prolific in promise:—

"The 'Religion of God,' as the true religion, will provide that every one may enjoy true liberty, but will prevent any one from becoming a tyrant. It will give the power to do good to each and all, but will prevent any one from doing evil. It will provide a comfortable house, the best suitable clothing, and wholesome food, for each and all. It will give a real education to every child, and will make men more manly and women more virtuous, loving, beautiful, charming, and ladylike. It will make good husbands and wives, good parents and children, good brothers and sisters, good republican citizens, and truly great republican leaders, since every healthy, grown-up Humanitarian will be voluntarily a useful member of society."

I cull one or two passages from this manual which seem to bear on the metempsychosis question; but I am free to confess they leave me far from clear:—

"Death is, therefore, nothing else than a temporary sleep of complete unconsciousness and forgetfulness, from which the soul passes on, by the power of God,

to the stage of dreams, until she gradually awakes to find herself provided with new means, or material organs; yet with the same desires and talents as acquired and possessed in the preceding life, and which in conjunction with external circumstances insure unerringly her reward and punishment for the good and evil thoughts, desires, and deeds practised by means of her own former human body, since the laws of God reward all that is good and punish all that is evil, without respect of time and person."

* * * * *

"There cannot be more perfect rewards and retribution for the human soul than those resulting from inherent desires and talents, outward circumstances, the loss of recollection at death, and the successive union with her organized human bodies and her severance from them.

"The human soul can neither produce life without successive births, nor entirely lose her recollection, and be born again without successive deaths, nor progress in wisdom, love and happiness, so as to convert her evil nature into a good one, without her successive losses of the old bodies and of recollection, and the successive acquisition of her newly-organized bodies.

"The loss of recollection, the existence of inherent desires and talents, called genius in man and instinct in animals, the successive births, lives, and deaths, not only insure the progress of the wise and good,

but also the gradual conversion of the foolish and the wicked, so that all human souls are becoming less and less miserable, and growing more and more happy.

"Real human bliss is, therefore, progressing, and real human misery is slowly receding, but neither the fool's paradise nor the lake of fire and brimstone has any real existence."

* * * * *

Among the contemplated arrangements for the world-wide spread of Humanitarianism is a complicated series of offices—and I am puzzled to guess how long it would be before they would be filled out of the present slender numbers. First among the "Constitutions" stands the following :—

"I. The Sacred Language.

"The first of the writer's discoveries with which it pleased God to benefit mankind being made in England on Sunday, June 17th, 1866, and the 'Religion of God' being written and first taught in the English language, the author, who is a native of Germany, considering himself nothing more than the chosen instrument of God (as every one ought to be), or the real servant of the human family whom he wishes to unite in one great and happy family, in spite of distance, and the present different classes, languages, colours, and religions, considers himself bound to declare English as the universal and sacred

language of all Humanitarians, and therefore in time of all mankind. Without one common language there can never be peace and a real fraternity amongst mankind, and as English is the language most spoken in the world, and the Anglo-Saxons have been, are, and will be the pioneers of morality, liberty, and social happiness, the Humanitarians of all nations in the world will follow the example of the German author, and accept the English language, not as chosen by a man, but by Providence, to become universal.

"All important books written in the dead languages only, and all important books which have been or will be written in any other spoken language, shall be translated into English. The dead languages will not be taught as hitherto, but in every school, whether in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, or Australia, English shall be taught besides the native language, so that all Humanitarians, whether born and educated in France, Germany, Russia, Spain, China, or Egypt, will be able to fraternize with each other, especially as distance will be reduced still more by the discoveries of scientific men or the teachers of the 'Religion of God.'

"These teachers of Humanitarians in all nations, must therefore speak English fluently, besides their native language; but they have no need to know or to teach any of the dead languages, which are nearly useless, and make the majority of pupils disgusted

with learning, and waste time, which would be much better employed in teaching a language universally spoken, and common sense by means of history, literature, practical science, and philosophy.

"However, divine service shall be conducted in the native language of the respective country until all are educated as Humanitarians, understand the sacred language well, and speak it fluently. The universal language will be one of the chief keys to open the doors of the material and intellectual progress for all the people."

But—I suppose it is heterodox to say, as one might have expected—it is in the matter of matrimony that Humanitarianism, eccentric all along, is most peculiar. Among the manifold "officers" of the Humanitarians (directors and chief directors, presidents, chief presidents, &c.), whose duties and modes of election are minutely described in the book, I find no mention of priests, but some such there must be, as is manifest from the following "service," which I subjoin in full as a fitting conclusion of this curious subject—curious as being a creed and culture elaborated from the brain of one man, who "knows" it to be all right:—

"Humanitarian Marriages.

"The love of man for woman and of woman for man is an essential part of human nature. Therefore, although sexual love may be temporarily suppressed

or perverted, yet it cannot be eradicated from human nature. For the God of Nature corrects with physical and mental pain not only those who suppress human nature by celibacy, but also those who corrupt human nature by polygamy and licentiousness.

"That the God of Nature corrects not only individuals who practice celibacy, but also society which approves of the example and teaching of the erring Jesus and Paul as regards matrimony—viz., that a life of celibacy is holier and therefore better than a married life—may be seen in countries in which Christianity seduces the most conscientious Christians to become priests, monks, and nuns.

"That the God of Nature corrects not only individuals who practise polygamy, but also society which esteems the polygamists Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, and Mahometan Saints, may be observed in countries in which the Bible seduces Christians to become Mormons, and in Mahometan countries.

"That the God of Nature corrects not only individuals who live licentiously, but also society which regards the social evil as a necessary evil, may be especially seen in the capitals of Christian countries.

"As every principle, the approval or the practice of which is corrected by the God of Nature is a vice, celibacy, as recommended by the erring Jesus and Paul and practised by Christian priests, monks, and

nuns, as well as polygamy and licentiousness, are therefore vices.

"The love of man for woman and of woman for man in uncorrupted human nature is, however, divine; for it leads to the marriage of the two lovers, and the God of Nature blesses only those who approve and practice monogamy (*i.e.*), the union by marriage of one man with one woman and of one woman with one man.

"That the God of Nature pervades with bliss the husband and wife, who, each forgetting self in the happiness of the other, are united by marriage in the holy bond of rational love, every Humanitarian husband and wife will know.

"The lives of loving and virtuous husbands and wives, especially when blessed with children, whom they educate to become healthy, intelligent, and loving men and women, are the holiest lives human beings can lead. For it is as great wisdom and virtue in husbands and wives to be parents of such children, as it is folly and crime to be murderers; since virtuous parents not only prolong their own lives, but are the means of giving life to others: whereas murderers not only shorten their own lives, but take the lives of others.

"As every principle the practice and approval of which is rewarded by the God of Nature is a virtue, and the approval and practice of monogamy is more blessed than that of any other virtue, a Humanitarian marriage is, therefore, the most meritorious act of

human life, and the solemnization of matrimony is the holiest performance sanctioned by the 'Religion of God.'

"In Humanitarian countries the solemnization of matrimony by any adult Humanitarian, according to Humanitarian rites, is sufficient to make two lovers husband and wife. In other countries, however, Humanitarians will in addition conform to the laws regarding matrimony if such laws require civil and not ecclesiastical marriages. The 'Religion of God' forbids marriages between relatives in the direct line, but recommends only marriages of persons not related either by consanguinity or affinity. The 'Religion of God,' however, sanctions only love marriages, and the matrimonial alliance of two lovers of different creeds, nations, and races is especially meritorious.'

"The Humanitarian Solemnization of Matrimony.

At the day and time appointed for the solemnization of matrimony the persons to be married shall come before the officiating Humanitarian with at least two witnesses. The officiating Humanitarian may then give a lecture or confine himself or herself to reading passages from the 'Religion of God' referring to Humanitarian marriages, after which the officiating Humanitarian shall say :—

"The omnipresent God of Nature and we are witnesses that these two lovers have come here with the avowed intention of uniting themselves in holy

matrimony as husband and wife. We, Humanitarians, acknowledge that the God of Nature, who is the only infallible being in existence, has been teaching in all countries and during all eternity that the love-marriage of one man with one woman and of one woman with one man is the only union of sexes conducive to human happiness. A married life is, therefore, the holiest life any man or woman can lead, for the God of Nature is blessing matrimony for the following and other reasons:—

"1. To satisfy the holy demand of uncorrupted human nature for sexual intercourse by the only means conducive to the physical, intellectual, and moral health of both sexes.

"2. To satisfy the holy desire of uncorrupted human nature for the society, sympathy, friendship, love, confidence, help, and comfort of one of the other sex.

"3. To satisfy the holy longing of uncorrupted human nature for propagating and improving our race in our children, thereby providing for ourselves happier human lives upon this earth, after the disorganization of our present body.

"4. To make individuals forget self and think of the happiness of others.

"5. To unite estranged families and nations in a bond of friendship.

"6. To mitigate the inequality, prejudices, and animosity created by erring or wicked priests and politicians.

"As you two lovers present wish to be married, I ask you in the interests of society and in the name of the God of Nature, who knows the secrets of all souls, and rewards and corrects instantly every human thought, desire, and act, to confess if either of you know any impediment why you may not be religiously joined together in holy matrimony. For, if you are united otherwise than the 'Religion of God,' or the just laws of all countries allow, you are neither joined together by the God of Nature, nor is your matrimony lawful.

"*If both lovers answer 'I know of no impediment,' then shall the officiating Humanitarian ask them:—*

"Do you love each other? Have you resolved to forget self and try to make each other happy? Do you believe yourself capable of maintaining a family?

"*If both answer 'Yes,' the officiating Humanitarian shall address the man:—*

"Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after the divine precepts of the 'Religion of God,' in holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love, comfort, and honour her, and keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

"*If the man answers 'I will,' then shall the officiating Humanitarian ask the woman:—*

"Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together after the divine precepts of the 'Religion of God,' in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt

thou love, honour, and comfort him, and keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

"*If the woman answers 'I will,' then shall the officiating Humanitarian cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and to say after him as follows:—*

"I *M.* take thee *N.* to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honour, and to cherish, till death us do part, according to the holy precepts of the 'Religion of God,' and thereto I plight thee my troth.

"*Then shall they loose their hands, and the woman with her right hand taking the man by his right hand, shall likewise say after the officiating Humanitarian:—*

"I *N.* take thee *M.* to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honour, and to cherish, till death us do part, according to the holy precepts of the 'Religion of God,' and thereto I plight thee my troth.

"*Then shall they again loose their hands, and the man shall put a plain gold ring on the fourth finger of the woman's left hand, and shall address her after the officiating Humanitarian:—*

"I give you this ring as a memorial of our wedding, and as a sign to society that you are a married woman. Let it always remain on the fourth finger of

your left hand, both as a remembrance that I am your husband, and as a protection for yourself and others from temptations.

"*Then the woman shall put a plain gold ring on the fourth finger of the man's left hand, and shall address him after the officiating Humanitarian :—*

"I give you this ring as a memorial of our wedding, and a sign to society that you are a married man. Let it always remain on the fourth finger of your left hand, both as a remembrance that I am your wife, and as a protection for yourself and others from temptations.

"*Then shall the man and woman give each other both hands, and the officiating Humanitarian shall say :—*

"Forasmuch as *M.* and *N.* have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before the God of Nature and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring, and by joining of hands, I pronounce that they be man and wife together, in the name of the infinitely wise, just, and merciful God of Nature, and in the name of society. Let, therefore, neither man nor woman come between husband and wife, whom love has united, and whom society and the God of Nature have joined in holy matrimony.

"And you, husband and wife, let your example be a joy to Humanitarians and a light to the Heathens,

and the God of Nature will bless you according to your merits—viz., in proportion as you keep the holy precepts of the 'Religion of God.' May all of us deserve a blessing."

After all, the duties of Humanitarianism did not appear to be so special as to require all this new apparatus. They are, in fact, very much like those prescribed by most other religions.

The Twelve Principal Duties of Humanitarians towards themselves and all human beings, as taught by God Himself through the Laws of the Universe.

"1. Be neither suicides, drunkards, nor bigots, but prolong your lives and render them happy.

"2. Be neither credulous fools nor deriding and deceiving sophists, but educate yourselves and mankind at large.

"3. Be neither murderers nor tyrants, but take an interest in the material and political welfare of all human beings.

"4. Be neither monks and nuns, nor polygamists and Bible communists, but marry to live with one wife or husband.

"5. Be neither neglectful as parents, nor ungrateful as children, but be good parents and dutiful children.

"6. Do not embitter your lives either by quarrels or deceit, but be loving and truthful husbands and wives.

"7. Be neither toiling slaves nor useless idlers, but work and rest moderately.

"8. Hate, with all your soul, deceit, slander, and crimes, but love, and convert by the judicious mercy all criminals and impostors.

"9. Be neither indifferent nor prejudiced towards any newly discovered knowledge, but take an interest in every truth.

"10. Be neither misers nor vagabonds and thieves, but assist, if rich, or ask for assistance, if poor, since unavoidable poverty is no disgrace.

"11. Be neither silent nor perjurers, but be true witnesses.

"12. Do not honour either hereditary titles and orders, or despise the children born out of wedlock and of criminal parents, but esteem and imitate all truly noble men and women, so as to acquire a really noble nature.

SOCIABLE HERETICS.

It is a dreadful thing to say, but my life is gradually resolving itself into one long quest of Heterodoxy. As the Pharisees of old compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, so do I to find one heretic; though his previously unregenerate condition relieves me from the necessity of making him what those masters in Israel made their disciples. It was in such a spirit that I wrote to the Rev. Charles Voysey, who is always—he will excuse my saying so—a safe resource for heresy; and he obligingly sent me by return of post his "Gospel of Hell Fire," together with a few other publications, which were all that I could desire in the way of written documents; whilst he added, what was even more to my purpose, an invitation to attend the opening soirée of the "Liberal Social Union." I sniffed heresy, and accepted on the spot.

There is one difficulty which I believe always attaches more or less to gatherings of this character, not only in reference to the female sex, but even in its degree to the stronger side of humanity; perhaps more pertinently still to that neutral epicene or third sex to which I belong, the clergy of the Church of England as by law established. It is this: shall we go dressed

or undressed? I am not alluding to any reversion towards the Adamic Dispensation of Innocence; but simply to the dispensation of dress coats. Shall we assume the swallow-tail (I am now speaking only of the second and third sexes), or shall we forbear? For myself I have an Alexandrine mode of cutting this Gordian knot, which I proceed to impart for the benefit of those whom I am so proud to call my "clerical brethren." It is this—when in doubt, assume the canonicals. To neglect the *tenue de soir* may be to imperil the Establishment, or seriously to compromise it in the estimation of Dissenters. To wear the swallow-tail when others did not might savour of a proclivity towards "worldliness;" but the M.B. waistcoat and long-tailed coat literally cover a multitude of sins: so in clerical attire of the most intense and severe order did I go to mingle with the unconverted.

When I got to the Beethoven Rooms, Harley Street, where the armies of the infidel were to gather, so numerous were the hosts that the janitor who took the hats and coats was in a state of positive bewilderment; but I think my reverend aspect tranquillized him for the time being. Upstairs I was in a moment relieved from all anxiety as to costume, for the army wore nothing in the shape of uniform. Mr. Voysey was in evening dress, with white kids, like a layman's. Mr. Conway wore a frock coat, with light continuations; and the Unitarian ministers were as clerical and correct as myself. So all uneasiness on that

score vanished. Two ladies were extracting a duet from a piano on the platform, and in the body of the room a multitude seethed and listened. I met a number of genial heretics, who really looked as innocent and harmless as the orthodox could have done under the circumstances. By-and-by the ladies ceased to pound and the pianoforte to protest, and we went peacefully on to the real business of the evening, which I had been informed was the reading of a paper, with subsequent discussion on the comparative advantages of openness and reserve in the expression of opinion. There was a *soupçon* of Jesuitry in the title, blending with the heresy I felt sure I should get, which made the subject irresistibly attractive to me; and I felt quite impatient while the chairman introduced the reader with the usual complimentary remarks.

Mounting his rostrum, the Sociable Heretic (I hope he was a heretic, though I "name no names," in case he should not be) said—

The Society which we inaugurate to-night is distinguished by the title of the Liberal Association. It is well that we should clearly apprehend what this term Liberal really means, at any rate, in what sense we propose to employ it.

This is the more necessary at the commencement of our operations, because the term Liberal has been greatly abused, so much so that it has been constantly employed to designate those who hold one particular

class or type of religious doctrines, quite irrespective of the manner or the spirit in which they profess them.

True liberality is a state of mind which tolerates all types and all shades of opinions, and is willing to investigate and to discuss them in a temperate, unprejudiced, and rational manner. But I hear some of you ready to reply, How can a Society which professes itself Liberal, comprehend persons who take the most partial and narrow views on moral and theological questions—men whose creeds range and vibrate from extreme Ultra-Calvinism on one side, to extreme Ultramontanism on the other? Now, I do not mean to say that an Ultra-Calvinist or an Ultramontanist of the type we usually meet with could find any place whatever within the limits of our Association, but I affirm at the same time that there is no reason in the nature of things why they should not do so.

Let me then for a moment or two try to define what I mean, and in doing so let us see if we can find the true basis on which this Association proposes to stand.

Let us imagine, first, that a rigid Protestant of the strictly Biblical school appears before us with the Bible in his hand, and addresses us as follows:—"Here in this volume is an end of all controversy. Here is the law and the testimony. Here is a verbal revelation from the Most High that tells precisely what we are and what we are not to believe, and such being

the case, it is at our everlasting peril that we even doubt or reject it." With a person who has made up his mind to this view of the case, and admits no open questions in relation to these fixed and settled convictions, we could certainly have no intercourse, simply because there is no common ground whatever to start from. But should a person of the very same school of thought come to us and say, "I believe, after careful consideration, that the Bible is verbally inspired, and that it unfolds a whole scheme of theology, which I cordially accept. I believe all this because my reason is convinced of it. New evidence may alter my views, and as no question can possibly be closed against further research, and no one's judgment can be infallible, I am ready to allow the same liberty to others as I claim for myself, and shall welcome everything which pours new light upon the tremendous questions of human nature and human destiny." If, I say, a person even of the strictest opinions came to us in this spirit, and with these veritable intentions, he is, to my mind, in the truest sense of the word, a Liberal thinker, and consequently in fundamental harmony with other Liberal thinkers of different schools of thought all over the world. Exactly in the same way, if an Ultramontane Catholic comes to us and roundly asserts the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, without any reserve or any admission of open questions, or any idea of the right of human reason to question and criticise the claims of authority, such a mind could find no niche

for itself in a Society which professes *liberality* in our sense of the word; but if a sincere Catholic comes with the profession that, although his reason is convinced, yet the questions in dispute are still open, and that fresh light may modify his whole theory, I do not see any reason why a Catholic of this temper should not find himself in perfect harmony with the objects we all profess to have in view.

The basis, then, on which I suppose we take our stand is twofold:—

I. That all intellectual questions are open questions.

II. That the spirit in which they are discussed is one of perfect respect for every reasonable individual who admits the full right of research, and welcomes the free expression of all the convictions to which such research may lead.

I particularly wish you to mark that I use the word *intellectual* to designate the questions which are open ones. I do not go quite so far in relation to moral and æsthetic questions. Good *morals* literally mean good *manners*, and I do not think that any Association like the present can violate the accepted laws of *good manners*, or allow their propriety to be brought down upon the arena of open discussion *at all*. We stand upon the accepted manners and morals of the age and community in which we live, but intellectually and speculatively we hold ourselves free from any mental restraint. That at least is my idea of the only possible

basis of a liberal association between minds who profess *perfect* intellectual freedom.

But now comes a very important point. Men may be intellectually free, but how far is it wise or politic to act unrestrainedly upon that freedom? Many (perhaps we may say most) of those living around us have fixed traditional religious beliefs. How far is it wise or right to run the risk of unsettling such fixed religious beliefs in others by discussing openly their truth or falsehood? Fixed religious beliefs, though they may be rationally untenable, yet exercise a great moral restraint upon those who hold them. How far, then, is it wise for those who may be termed advanced thinkers to ventilate their doubts? And should they not rather practise reserve in the expression of their convictions, in deference to others whose faith may be shaken, whose moorings may be loosed, and who may thus be driven from a firm mental anchorage into an ocean of incertitude and doubt?

Now this is assuredly a very serious question, and requires a good deal of calm consideration.

And, first, in reference to this subject of reserve, let me point out that it is quite natural for us to practise reserve in relation to our religious feelings. There is something in them so sacred and tender that it appears almost like desecration to expose them, except on rare and proper occasions, to the gaze of others. When I was in Brighton a short time ago I saw an announcement placarded all over the town that on Sunday next

twenty Christians would relate the story of their conversion in the Town Hall, and all classes were invited to hear them. "Now here," I thought, "is a proper case of reserve;" nor was it possible to repress a doubt as to the purity and elevation of their religious sentiments, which loved to parade themselves before the eyes of the public at large.

But when we come to theological opinions this natural ground of reserve at once vanishes. Theological opinions are based partly on facts real or supposed, and partly on reasonings which grow out of them, and to neither of these is any particular sanctity attached which could lead us to shrink from their full discussion.

Let us look, for example, at the cosmogony of the Old Testament. Here, although many sects of Christians base their philosophy of the universe entirely upon it, yet there is certainly nothing which calls for reserve. We may certainly discuss quite openly the question whether this world we live in was created just as it is six thousand years ago, or whether the enormous antiquity of it is not borne out by geological research; whether Adam and Eve were really the first human pair; or whether we have not plain evidence of a far higher antiquity as regards human existence. There is nothing particularly sacred or awful in an arrow-head turned up in the tertiary river-drift that we should hurry it away into darkness for fear it should antagonize the story of the Pentateuch.

In the same way we may surely discuss without reserve the question whether there is any historical evidence of the Deluge, of the sun standing still to give the Israelites time to pursue and massacre their enemies, of the ass speaking to Balaam with human voice, or the whale swallowing Jonah. Doubtless there are many who swallow all this in perfect good faith, and with the most pious trust in divine revelation; but we can hardly be called upon, in deference to their feelings, to do the same without something like evidence; and if we demand evidence at all, why, of course the whole historical question involved in it must come out into the broad daylight of unreserved discussion.

Turn we from the things presented as facts in the Old Testament to those which are presented as facts in the New. And here we come upon more delicate ground, because these facts are bound up more or less closely with the whole nerve and growth of our religious life.

Perhaps if it were tacitly allowed for every one to form his own opinions on these historical questions; if no great conclusions were drawn affecting the outward basis of society; and if no authority were arrogated, to which all are summoned both intellectually and socially to bow, it would be well to practise reserve, and leave every man to follow the leadings of his own reason and conscience. But this is not by any means our present position. There is no reserve

practised by those who maintain the historical certitude of that on which the whole network of our popular theology is grounded.

Paley's Evidences are expounded in our highest seats of learning, and similar reasonings are set forth in almost every school, and college, and pulpit in the country.

All over Europe more or less it is stated and maintained, and argued both on historical and metaphysical grounds, that Jesus Christ was born into this world in a manner perfectly miraculous; that He Himself performed a series of astounding miracles culminating in the raising of the dead to life; that He Himself rose from the dead, and visibly ascended to heaven; that He claimed an unlimited power over human faith and obedience; that on leaving the world He communicated this power to His apostles—this divine authority to the church; which church accordingly retains the right of deciding what is truth—of wielding an invisible spiritual power in the sacraments—of forgiving sins, and pronouncing absolution on the sinner.

Now, this whole theory, whether received as a creed, an ecclesiastical institution or visible authority, is either true or false. If it be true, the import to every human soul is tremendous, and so far from any one practising *reserve*, the divine plan of forgiveness and salvation should be proclaimed on every housetop by every believer. If, on the contrary, we have any

reason to believe that it is false, the power for evil wielded by such pretensions is equally tremendous; any reserve in maintaining its baselessness is unworthy any man who pretends to love either truth or humanity.

Indeed, it seems almost impossible to imagine why theories like these should not be freely and openly discussed, and doubts either confirmed or dissipated, but for the old historical assumption of absolute authority, which has been employed so unscrupulously to shelter and protect the dogmas of a dominating Church. We all know that two or three centuries ago, to deny or even openly to doubt this scheme of ecclesiastical supremacy was to expose the doubter to the horrors of the Inquisition or the flames of martyrdom. No wonder therefore that reserve should be practised in those days. There was a specially good reason for it.

Those evil days have indeed passed away, but the shrinking from any open challenge of a prevailing and established creed still remains, and the hand of outward authority (though it no longer wields a sword) still lies heavy upon the head of an outspoken religious inquirer. Outspokenness in theological matters, when it runs counter to established dogmas, still brings with it its pains and penalties, sometimes in the form of abuse, sometimes of neglect, always in the form of unpopularity or scorn.

There are not probably ten parish churches in all

England which would welcome the presence of Bishop Colenso in the pulpit, or ten clergymen who would ask him to preach, although we may be sure that there are not merely tens but hundreds who in their inmost minds go along with the Bishop in his researches, and sympathize in most of his conclusions. It is in such cases as these that the relative effects of openness and reserve become visible—the one is punished by public opinion, the other is winked at, and ignored. Sober respectability accompanied by a little acknowledged hypocrisy and reserve is more appreciated by public opinion than any degree of unreserved and honest doubt.

But now we come to the most important aspect of the whole question—viz., What is the real ultimate effect of this kind of reserve upon the nobler and most earnest-minded Christians of the present day? Is that effect any less painful or less deleterious than perfect freedom of discussion? Admit that such outspoken freedom has its grave and questionable aspect, admit that many minds unfit to struggle with doubt may be unhinged; on which side, on that of openness or reserve, lie the greatest dangers to be avoided, the most formidable evils to be feared? Remember this is not an age in which doubts and questionings can be hidden and ignored. Do what we will, close our mouths as we may, there is a vast undercurrent of disbelief in established dogmas which it is perfectly impossible to keep hidden from the

thoughts and suspicions of every young inquirer. Taking this into account, I think we shall not fail to come to the conclusion that the practice of reserve is in the end far the most destructive to all sincere and whole-hearted belief. For what are the phenomena presented by such reserve to the mind sincerely inquiring, not after *orthodoxy*, but after *truth?* In place of that tone of earnest conviction which carries power to the heart of the listener, in place of the singleness of eye, that unhesitating repose upon *truth*, felt and treasured, he hears half-hearted statements, dogmas fenced round with all kinds of moral limitations, inward doubts concealed under orthodox phrases that they may not appear like doubts, and qualifications of all kinds designed to save the doctrines technically professed from clashing with the moral convictions of the age. This is the kind of religious teaching we now hear on all sides. Just listen to an ordinary preacher, whose creed affirms the eternity of future punishments, stating this tremendous fact to his hearers. Does he now clothe it in such language as we find unhesitatingly employed by John Bunyan or Jonathan Edwards? does he enter into such particulars as they did, to strike terror into the hearts of the listener? No, no. The moral sense of the age would not tolerate it if he did, and so he wraps up his teaching in a few Biblical phrases about the worm that dies not, and the fire that is not quenched, and sheltered under this verbal authority, leaves

every hearer to draw his own conclusions as to what it all means. This is merely an instance of what I mean by *reserve* in place of *openness*, in stating our religious convictions. And what holds good in regard to the doctrine above mentioned, holds good in regard to almost all the great crucial dogmas which came forth in all the sharpness of logical definition at the time of the Reformation. The ideas of election, reprobation, vicarious atonement, original sin, human inability, effectual calling, and a host of others have undergone a complete transformation by the moral thought of the age; but yet they are all kept on the *statute book*, and all *proclaimed* under limitation and reserve.

Now, the effect of this is, assuredly, to make all religious teaching sound hollow and unreal. The inquirer is puzzled and perplexed, he does not know what he has to accept and what to reject: his whole mind is put into the attitude of antagonism and doubt, and by being led to reject a *part*, he ends probably by rejecting the whole substance of religious truth.

This, I know, is the mental history of hundreds and thousands of young people in the present day. And what we have now to ask ourselves is *this*—Would not perfect openness and candour in stating difficulties and probing doubts be far more conducive to religious principle and reasonable faith?

I think so, for this *reason*. When a large demand is made upon our faith (as is the case of those who

profess the entire miraculous constitution of the church and creed of Christendom), and when notwithstanding the profession only half-hearted statements and qualified convictions are put forward to support it; when, in fact, there is a struggle clearly going on between the demands of orthodoxy on the one hand and the moral sense of the age on the other, the mind of the inquirer is thrown necessarily into a state of antagonism to all belief.

For if a part only, or to say the least, a very qualified interpretation of the current belief be true, may not the whole turn out, under the force of a severer criticism, to be equally untenable? This, I say, is the natural effect of a half-hearted profession. On the other hand, when doubts and difficulties are freely expressed and canvassed, the faith principle in our nature is, as it were, put on its guard. Faith is far more natural and sympathetic to the great mass of human minds than scepticism, and any open criticism of what that faith involves makes us cling to it all the more firmly. When we think we know all that can fairly be said against a reasonable system of religious truth, we find, perchance, that it does not amount to anything very stringent or formidable after all—nay, in place of the mysterious fear conveyed in an inuendo, we discover that the position of unbelief when fully stated is by no means strong or unanswerable. A natural reaction therefore sets in in its favour, and our faith being now grounded in reason

and argument, and having no reserve to fear, holds up its head in the light of day and defies any further assault, and thus attains a simplicity as well as a vigour which is quite impossible under the system of reserve.

Let me bring this contrast into a more concrete form, by showing you how it stands in the writings of two of the most remarkable men of this century.

John Henry Newman, in his Apologia, describes the human intellect as a ravening beast, that has to be driven back by the iron bar of authority; to use his own words, "Authority smiting hard, and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive intellect."

If this means anything, it means that our reason (except under outward control) is our greatest foe—and that the gift of it is only consistent with the benevolence of the Deity, on the ground that He has provided an antidote in the Church. In other words, that without the teaching of the Church, ignorance and imbecility would be a blessing. Can anything, I ask, be more suicidal than the favourite crusade which all the abettors of authority in whatever form are so apt to proclaim against the human reason?

How do we know then that there is a Supreme Being at all? How do we know that there exists either in the Bible or in the Church a revelation of His will? Nay, how do we know, even if there is a revelation, that such a revelation speaks the truth?

How do we know that God cannot lie? How, I ask, except by falling back upon our rational faculties and moral instincts?

How does Dr. Newman conclude that there is an external authority in the world?—that this authority has any truth to communicate—that the truth if communicated is good and not evil?—how, but by the exercise of that very reason he would curb and repress?

If my aggressive intellect has led me wrong in pulling down the claims of authority, may not his aggressive intellect have been wrong in setting it up?

If reason itself is a delusion and a snare, why must it be right just when it leads to one particular conclusion and wrong when it leads to any other? To decry reason as delusive, and then appeal to it to prove the claims of authority is not very far from a *reductio ad absurdum*. If reason makes a false conclusion in one case, why not in another? If it be untrustworthy in the very nature of things, then no truth is possible to man. As well get into a basket and try to lift ourselves up by the handles.

Turn we to the other side of the contrast—which we find in a distinctive utterance of the great Nonconformist Robert Hall—namely, this: "Whatever retards a spirit of inquiry is favourable to error, and whatever promotes it is favourable to truth."

See the difference.

In the former case our intellectual life is at war with itself—is involved in perpetual conflict and contradiction.

In the latter case the reason is single of eye and aim, and if engaged in conflict, it is only a conflict marching on to conquest—conquest over error and darkness, ignorance and evil.

And how do these conflicts respectively end? The conflict of reason with authority, if we may judge by the condition of those countries where it more especially prevails, ends in doubt, then indifference, then nihilism. Such is the present condition as far as religious matters go of nearly the whole male population of France, Spain, and Italy. On the other hand the result of the conquests made by reason untrammelled by authority are seen in the steady progress of moral ideas, the gradual amelioration of the ills of humanity, the decline of superstition, and the increased love and reverence for the true, the beautiful, and the good.

We have heard of the devotion of which ignorance is the mother, we have heard of the religion of the ascetic and the monk, we have heard of the zeal of the sectarian: may we not look forward in the future to the religion of free thought, where there may be faith without bigotry, zeal without persecution, toleration without coldness and insult; where piety is reconciled with reason, love to the Divine with the highest knowledge, and where labour for the conversion of the world is associated at once with

science, philanthropy, and all that is highest and best?

Then began a discussion. The Rev. John Hunt, a clergyman of I know not what persuasion, simply patted the reader on the back—metaphorically, of course—and quite agreed that there were subjects on which reticence might advantageously be exercised, quoting rather more texts than the Sociable Heretics seemed quite to care about, but dexterously avoiding collision with anybody. An amiable gentleman was Mr. Hunt, who might almost be pictured as bringing the Ultra-Calvinist and Ultramontanist to meet together, the Protestant and Catholic to kiss one another. Then followed Mr. Conway, who, as the representative of Fox's Chapel, could not quite agree with anybody or anything, and was not quite sure about this reserve, in matters even of morality. Mr. Conway is American; and I trembled lest we should get at once upon Free Love, or Shakerism, or something equally tremendous. But Mr. Conway's thunder was mild, and he "aggressed" nobody.

After some little delay, a lady was induced to speak—Miss Marshall; and a nice little lady-like speech she made too, stroking down the worthy lecturer as gently as, and of course even more pleasantly than the Rev. John Hunt had done. Then followed a Bengalese merchant, who made a sensation with his picturesque Oriental dress and nervous declamation in slightly—but only slightly—broken Eng-

lish. It was all in the mutual admiration way; as was also the eloquent address of the Rev. R. R. Suffield, quondam Roman Catholic priest, but now the pastor of a Free Christian Church, and a Sociable Heretic. Mr. Voysey followed with a brief address, and then a clergyman of the Established Church, who had to be fished up from the tea-room, where he was practising "reserve," proposed a vote of thanks to the reader of the paper, which seemed about to be carried by acclamation, when Mr. Levy, a gentleman of dialectical renown, got up on the platform, and, while seconding the vote of thanks, protested, as a dialectician of course ought to do, against any reserve at all. They certainly do not practise any in their Socratic Society. Mr. Levy seemed to find a great many sympathizers in the room, if one might judge by the plaudits of gloved hands; but even he did not bring Free Love on the *tapis*, and nothing occurred to mar the success of the evening. The gentle opposition of Mr. Levy acted only like a mild titillation after the somewhat monotonous repetitions of unqualified approval.

Of course, if one could only put out of sight the tremendous fact of unorthodoxy, these social gatherings might be regarded as very nice indeed. To see "those people"—it is the way they are always described—"those people," or, less grammatically, "those sort of people"—to see them struggling for Bohea or plates of plumcake, or afterwards breaking

up into little knots in the drawing-room, almost gave one the beautiful idea of the curates of the parish and district visitors at an orthodox "tea-fight." But, alas! what was the subject of their discourse? The St. George's Hall lecture of the next morning or afternoon. It was on a Saturday evening when the soirée was held—at a time when all good clergymen would be writing their sermons. It was actually not so far off twelve o'clock when the last stragglers broke off their heretical converse. Somebody even proposed a final performance on the pianoforte, but that, I rejoice to say, was overruled; and, as I went home through the quiet streets, I could not help feeling the jingle of a profane song running through my consciousness, and bearing, I am sure, some occult reference to the scene I had just quitted—"It's naughty, but it's nice!"

The following are the rules of this novel institution:—

"1. That the Society be called 'The Liberal Social Union.'

"2. That the object of the Society be the promotion of social intercourse and co-operation amongst liberal thinkers.

"3. That the Society have as its motto the following extract from the Apology of Socrates:—'Seeing you are an Athenian, of a city the most powerful and most renowned for wisdom and strength, are you not ashamed of being careful for riches, how you may

acquire them in greatest abundance, and for glory and honour, but care not nor take thought for wisdom and truth, and for your soul, how it may be made most perfect?"

"4. That the object of the Society, as set forth in Rule 2, be promoted by means of (1) conversaziones, discussions, lectures, and other social meetings; (2) when practicable, the circulation of pamphlets and books, and other agencies of a like nature as may be from time to time resolved upon.

"5. That the Society consist of (1) the original members, (2) those subsequently elected.

"6. That the persons entitled to become *original members* be those who were on the provisional committee appointed by 'The London Students' Union,' together with those who shall be invited by the committee to become members, on or before January 1st, 1874.

"7. That candidates for membership be proposed by one member, and seconded by another member; each of whom shall sign the following declaration:—'We, the undersigned, from our personal knowledge, believe that A. B. will be a desirable addition to the Society.'

"8. That the names of candidates be proposed at a meeting of the Society, at which the names of candidate, proposer, and seconder shall be read out; and that they come on for election at the next meeting.

"9. That the election be by ballot; one adverse

vote in five to exclude. If fewer than twenty votes are recorded at the election of any candidate, the name of that candidate to be submitted to another ballot at the next meeting of the Society.

"10. That the names of candidates be sent in to the secretary, and be laid by him before the committee previously to their being presented to the Society.

"11. That it be an honourable understanding among all members of this Society that no one shall blackball a candidate on account of any speculative opinion held or advocated by that candidate.

"12. That the entrance fee be 5*s.*, and the annual subscription 10*s.* 6*d.* In the case of members of a family residing in the same house, a second entrance fee will not be required. Donations will be accepted from members for the general purposes of the Seciety.

"13. That the Society be governed by a committee of twenty-four persons, consisting of ladies and gentlemen, who shall be elected at the annual general meeting. Casual vacancies to be filled up by the committee.

"14. That all meetings of the Society and of its committees be presided over by a chairman appointed at the previous meeting of the committee, or elected at the meeting. Five members must in every case be present to constitute a quorum.

"15. That the committee appoint treasurer and

secretary, or secretaries and subordinate officers, as they may deem necessary.

"16. That the committee have power to regulate the proceedings of the Society, and from time to time to frame such bye-laws as they may consider to be requisite.

"17. That no rule of the Society be rescinded or altered except at the annual general meeting, or at a special general meeting convened for the purpose.

"18. That if the conduct of any member be such as, in the opinion of the committee, to bring discredit upon the Society, he or she be liable to expulsion. No member shall be expelled except upon the recommendation of the committee (the option of withdrawal having previously been given to him), and by the votes of three-fourths of the members voting at a general meeting at which not less than twenty votes are recorded. The voting to be by ballot. When the expulsion of a member is to be considered by the committee, previous notice of the fact shall be given by the secretary to every member of the committee. And in the event of the matter being brought before the Society, a similar notice shall be sent to every member of the Society.

"19. That there be one general meeting of the Society on fixed days to be determined by the committee in every month with the exception of August and September."

AN UNHISTORIC CHRIST.

Guiding my devious footsteps by that Vade Mecum of Heterodoxy, the *National Reformer*, with its long and graduated list of heretical gatherings, I turned one evening in early spring towards the discussion room of the South London Secular Society, which is opposite the Surrey Theatre, there to hear Mr. Myles McSweeney discourse on the portentous thesis, "Was Christ an Historical Character?"

I missed several other *bonnes bouches* that evening to secure being present at this most amazing discussion. Mr. Bradlaugh, at the Hall of Science, was to discourse on Heinrich Heine; Mr. Hale, at Hackney, was to demonstrate Spiritualism to be false; Mr. Kaspary, to enlighten his sparse audience of Humanitarians on the Biblical Fall of Man—all interesting, if not edifying topics: but I would none of these. I would go and hear Myles McSweeney tear to tatters the last shred of faith—belief in a historic Christ. Let me honestly confess my ignorance: I did not know until I read that announcement that anybody did question the historical existence of Christ, whatever they might say as to His character and mission.

Arrived at my destination, I climbed the crazy

stair up which you have to mount to the discussion room of the South London Secularists, and found a moderately-sized apartment pretty well filled with genuine working men—great bearded fellows with the signs of labour on their horny hands, and fine massive foreheads and intellectual physiognomies, which showed that the mind had not lain dormant while the busy fingers were at work. Most of them wore their hats, many wideawakes, which gave quite a picturesque and brigandlike aspect to the gathering. Several were intent upon their *National Reformers*, which were being sold in the room; others grouped round a gentleman on the platform, who was telling them how to get tickets for Professor Huxley's lectures to working men at the School of Mines. "Sixpence for the course—a penny for a lecture by Huxley! You never heard anything like it, my boys. Only remember the theatre holds but six hundred, so be in time."

On the back of the platform, on which stood the customary table, was a dreadful daub of a drop-scene, plainly the relic of some recent private theatricals. In front of it stood a studious-looking elderly man, reading, with spectacles on nose. I was looking at him, and wondering whether it was Myles McSweeney, when, such is fame! he looked up from his book and greeted me interrogatively by name. It *was* Mr. Myles McSweeney, and he had guessed my identity!

By the time the lecture commenced the room was

quite filled, mostly by men, but with a few females here and there amongst them. I learnt that the subject had been on the *tapis* before, but still the discourse was to all intents and purposes a detached one. The line Mr. McSweeney took was, I found, that of Mr. Coxe and others, in reference to Greek Mythology—namely, that the gospel life of Christ was simply a solar myth. Mr. Coxe, it may be remembered, resolves the old story of Troy into the same astronomical elements. Mr. McSweeney did not say whether he accepted Mr. Coxe's theory—in fact, he did not mention it; but such was the most novel and extraordinary method which he applied to the life of Christ. It was simply an allegory. No such person ever existed.

The birth of Zoroaster, said the lecturer, had been predicted as to take place from an immaculate Virgin, and to be preceded by a miraculous star. He did not believe that such a person as Zoroaster ever lived, but the same kind of legend pervaded all religions. In the Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy it was said that the Wise Men came from the East "according to the prophecy of Zoroaster." Matthew mentioned the prophecy, but omitted the name of Zoroaster. This showed a fallacy, for without that prophecy Christianity had nothing to rest upon. The Child was to be born of the Virgo in the Zodiac; and Eben-Ezra, quoting from the Zendavesta, said, "In the Persian sphere there rises up in the face of the sign Virgo a beau-

tiful maiden with two ears of corn and a child, to whom she gives suck. Her we call the pure Virgin, and the child's name is Jesus the Saviour."

All ancient fables had some fact at the back of them, but this fact was hidden in the Christian myth. Bethlehem was simply the House of Bread, referring to the corn-ears, above-mentioned. It was the House of the Zodiac, the House of Bread; and the legend of Jesus was simply a Solar Allegory. The Sun acting on the Virgin Earth makes bread, the Saviour of men's lives!

Mr. McSweeney then digressed into a learned discussion on the age of the Sacred Writings. He went deeply into the chronology of the Hitopadesa and the Mahabarata, and from thence inferred that the Vedas ranged back as far as 1580 B.C., or a hundred years before Moses.

Forbes, in his Oriental Memoirs (the lecturer read all his authorities from the originals) said that the Hindoo religion spread over the whole world; and there could be no doubt that Stonehenge was an ancient relic of it. The Brahmins were the authors of the Ptolemaic as the Buddhists of the Copernican system of astronomy, and this nation gave to Greece her Eleusinian Mysteries. True, Hindooism was said to be modern; "but see," said Mr. McSweeney, "the stake the Established Church is playing for when she says this. Here is the Church of England with her eleven millions of revenue, and the Dissent-

ing bodies with their influence. So we have Christendom groaning under priestcraft. Isn't it worth while to tell lies on such terms?"

Sir William Jones appeared to him to settle the question. He identified the Greek Dionysus (whom Mr. McSweeney *would* term Dionysius) with Brahma, even tracing the name in Bromius. The same etymology gave us Bruma, the old name for Christmastide, when the Romans kept their Saturnalia, and—he remarked parenthetically, we keep it still—"Look at the public-houses in Christmas week!" The births of Apollo and of Bacchus were placed at this time, the 25th of December. So was the birth of Thor, at what was called Yule-tide. Sir William Jones identified Krishna with Apollo, or the Sun, and as a fact, all the chaos of pagan deities resolved themselves into one or two powers of nature, and especially into the Sun.

Christ, then, was said to have been born December 25th, when Apollo, or the Sun, was born too. He had his Four Evangelists, who represented the Four Seasons; his Twelve Apostles, who were the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac. At the Vernal Equinox nature was renewed. There was, as it were, a new creation. Then the sun crossed the equator, and that crossing represented the Crucifixion. The cross had always been the sign of the equinox.

Then, again, Easter Sunday was the great festival of all, because the sun and moon came into conjunc-

tion—Easter being always regulated by the moon. The very name Easter was taken from the Saxon Oester, and connected with the Phœnician Astarte, still pointing to the sun. Again, it was said that on March 25th the Holy Ghost "overshadowed" the Virgin Mary. From that time to December 25th was exactly nine months. It was simply an allegory of the influence of the sun on the earth.

Now, Mr. McSweeney went on to say, nobody knew how the Gospels came into existence. History was as silent as the grave. Taking a large Bible in his hand, he read the words "The Gospel according to St. Matthew," and asked, Did any one ever hear of a book so introduced? It was only the outcome of Roman Catholic Councils. They manufactured the "whole article." They said that unless we believed we should be damned; and the sects, including their Unitarian friends, put down the Romish Church as the Scarlet Lady. They repudiated the very source of their religion! With regard to the two genealogies, he did not believe that the names in Matthew were the names of men at all, but of gods who were worshipped in early times before Christianity was thought of.

By way of tracing this solar myth back to its Indian source, Mr. McSweeney reminded his hearers that Buddhism and Brahminism had had a great fight, in which the Buddhists appeared to have got the worse.

Missionaries of this conquered faith went forth, and spread over China and Thibet about 600 B.C., and—speaking of his own convictions—he thought that Buddhism was the purest and most philosophical system of religion "ever invented." In Syria the Buddhists became the Essenes. If you compared the accounts of the Essenes by Pliny, Josephus, and Philo with what the Abbé Huc said of the Llamas of Thibet, the identity would be at once apparent. They also settled in Alexandria, which, a century before Christ, was as much the centre of knowledge as London or Paris is now. We found among these the expectation of a Deliverer, who should free man from the iron yoke of Rome. In 60 B.C. the Senate itself was alarmed at the expectation. By-and-by, some said that the Deliverer ought to come, and others that he *had* come. The old idea was made up into Jesus Christ.

So again with the Platonic philosophers. Plato had said prophetically that if a man perfectly good and righteous were to appear he would be scourged and killed. It was, as we had seen, a time of expectation. The Platonic philosophers saw a place was vacant, and said so—"talked the man Jesus into existence." Many of the minor details of Christ's life were but reproductions of what had been attributed to Plato himself.

When Plato's father, for instance, had espoused his cousin, Apollo appeared in a dream, and told him

that she was with child by the divinity. Ariston believed, and Plato was born on the day of Apollo, December 25th! Again, when Plato was brought before the judges he escaped death, but was sold for thirty minæ—thirty "pieces of silver!"

The Christian doctrine, too, argued the lecturer at great length and with much detail, was purely Platonic. Plato taught only what came down to him. "Therefore," he added, "Christianity—or what you call so—is as old as the hills: but in the absence of all evidence as to Christ or the Apostles, you cannot talk of Christ being historical—history is silent!"

"I have," concluded this very outspoken lecturer, "read all mythologies; but I find none so obscure and absurd as this. The circumstance of the Annunciation is paralleled only by Jupiter and Leda, and the legend of Leda is the more poetical of the two."

No doubt the Unitarian would say Christ was a man, and the miracles were falsely attributed to him. But we were talking of one whose mother was a virgin and whose father a "ghost," and who was nowhere without miracles.

So the genealogy came to be—"The Roman Catholics begat the Protestants, the Protestants begat the Denominationalists, the Denominationalists begat the Deists, the Deists begat the Infidels, and the Infidels begat Sensible Men!"

The lecture seemed to give great satisfaction; for it was warmly applauded throughout its course, and at

its close. Then followed a discussion. One, Mr. Hudson, favoured the notion of a man Christ with the idea of miracles grafted on his history. He was, I presume, a Unitarian or a Theist. If ever he wished to be a Christian he would, he said, come and listen to his friend McSweeney, whose theory he carefully dissected, claiming Christ as the historic Freethinker and Republican, whom it was against Free Thought to doubt. He was a noble, erring man, but taught a grand philosophy. "Therefore," said Mr. Hudson, "I stand up for Jesus Christ."

Mr. Collins, while agreeing that many persons feared free thought might be injured by doubting the historic character of Christ, still argued that we should seek the truth only. The knowledge conveyed in this Christian allegory was no fanciful tale, but a grand poetic teaching.

Mr. Gardner, who was supposed to be the great champion of Orthodoxy, was certainly the least satisfactory speaker, and injured his case, as weak friends mostly do. He confessed he had "had to *lay* a-bed all the morning and 'fog out' about the Essenes." McSweeney he regarded as simply "theory-blind," and proceeded to dissect his solar method, though with nothing like the same skill which had been shown in its propounding. Surely here, if ever, was an opportunity for the Christian Evidence Society sending one of their best men.

As I descended the rickety stairs with my strange

companions, dropping, like each of them, some coppers in a tin money-box invitingly held out for the purpose, I could not but think it would be well if some of our preachers would do as I had done that night—put on a black tie and a morning coat, heedless of what the old ladies of their congregations might say, and go and hear the arguments of these working men against the very foundations of the faith.

Surely pulpit language would be more real if preachers knew *how much* they had to combat, how deep down the doubt goes, and how it is not a mere superficial disbelief, but one that bases itself on study, varied if not profound, and reading which may be desultory, but which is certainly destructive.

The doubters will not come to us; then surely our policy is to go to them, and show them that our theology will bear discussion, and that we really do hold what we profess to hold as necessary to salvation.

ADVANCED UNITARIANISM.

The Sunday preceding St. Patrick's Day, 1874, was to me one of strange and varied experiences, making it evident that heresy, as well as misery, renders one acquainted with remarkable neighbours. I spent the morning in ransacking the Irish neighbourhoods for incendiary papers; and in the afternoon "I demonstrated," like a good Fenian, at the Amnesty Meeting in Hyde Park. Failing to hear any of the oratory on that occasion, and being rather deafened than otherwise by the noise of many brass bands playing the "Tramp Chorus" in different keys, I tore myself from the Reformers' Oak—which, by the way, is an elm tree—and flew on the wing of a Hansom to St. George's Hall, where Dr. Zerffi was to lecture on "The Dawn of Religious Ideas as Exemplified in the Vedas and Zendavesta." From the ridiculous to the sublime, as we all know, is but a single step! Having also, on the previous Sunday, heard Mr. McSweeney prove Christ a myth, I thought it would fall into a natural sequence if, in the evening, I went to hear Mr. Antill, the "Advanced" Unitarian, demolish the Twelve Apostles. That was to be his theme; and I foresaw that he would treat it distinctively. Unita-

rians, if I may, on the vigil of St. Patrick, be allowed the Hibernicism, advance "backwards."

The Advanced Unitarians gather in the lower room of a dancing academy immediately adjoining the Gower Street Station of the Metropolitan Railway. There is, I feel sure, some occult connexion between Terpsichore and Heterodoxy, into which I shall hope one day, when I am in a philosophic mood, to examine. I had previously "done" the Christadelphians in this very ball-room; and, naturally enough, sought the same *salle* when I went to interview my "Advanced" friends. I knew the Christadelphians had moved to other quarters; but a single glance around, when I got into the dancing academy, told me I was not among the Advanced Unitarians. I begin to know a heretic by sight; and the gentleman who was "orating" at a Pembroke table on a platform was none such, I was sure. He was only mildly Unorthodox. I asked a faithful janitor where the Advanced Unitarians were to be found, and, with the information "Down stairs," given with more piety than politeness—and coarse bearishness than either—he showed me out into the street and shut the door. I had strayed, by mistake, into a congregation of some kind of Presbyterians.

I had to wait about for some time before the "Advanced" ones came, and tried area gates and everything in the shape of a door to see where "downstairs" could be. There was another Hall opposite,

where something was going on; and two active gentlemen flew across the road and presented me with placards entitled "Dying Testimony to the Blood." They were not Advanced Unitarians, I was sure. By-and-by, however, a man appeared lighting up an entry I had not tried, and I gladly paid my threepence for a reserved seat and passed down a narrow stone stairway, which reminded me of that leading to the catacombs in Highgate Cemetery, into the large but somewhat damp and mouldy-smelling underground room, where the Advanced Unitarians were to gather.

A young man, in a sealskin cap, was getting ready, and seemed to be behindhand. It is a dreadful evidence of the demoralizing effects of Heterodoxy that punctuality seems to be lost in exact proportion to the prevalence of the heresy. Schismatics seem never to be in time. In front of a permanent platform stood a square locomotive pulpit, which, I know not why, reminded me of a portable gallows or guillotine. A lower platform was in front of this, and on the latter the breathless youth flung a four-legged table and a cane-bottomed chair; flew with two brass candlesticks and a large soda-water glass of liquid into the pulpit, and then lighted up the gas all over the room. A black cat was present, and seemed to take great interest in the proceedings, only its nerves were shaken by the young man's impetuosity until it came and sat beside me, on the reserved seat, where it remained

throughout a great part of the proceedings, as demure as an Advanced Unitarian himself.

Two ladies, who looked harmless enough, had entered and passed on to the platform without my taking much notice, when suddenly myself and the cat were startled simultaneously by a tremendous noise. The lady—one of them—had begun to play upon a most uncompromising harmonium, which I had not seen, and the player did not quite know how to manage. She fired off a series of hymn tunes, of which I could not understand the meaning until later on in the evening; and, if she will excuse my saying so, she gave me the idea that her fingers, every now and then, got into a knot, or entangled in the keys, while the instrument creaked and groaned as if conscious of being ill-used. By way of climax she thundered out Haydn's Hymn to the Emperor, and that seemed to be the signal for Mr. Antill, the officiating minister of the evening, to come in. He drew aside a curtain at the back of a platform, and was in and had given out the anthem, "I will Arise," before I knew what he was about. We did arise, and so did the voices of the Advanced Unitarians. They sang like Stentors, and even the ventose harmonium could not drown them, though it did its best.

By way of commencement, Mr. Antill, who was an elderly gentleman in clerical dress, read Matthew x., with frequent comments in passing; but as these comments all reappeared in the subsequent sermon, it is

not necessary to transcribe them here. Some hymns were sung, and a regular Form of Prayer gone through from a printed sheet, which the congregation held in their hands, but were not polite enough to allow me to see. It was a sort of compilation from the Church of England Prayers, with, of course, all the Trinitarian passages omitted. I fancy it was much the same as Mr. Voysey's Ritual. I recognised, at all events, a special prayer for literary men and editors, which I know occurs in the St. George's Hall Litany:—

"We ask that it may please Thee to enlighten and assist all literary persons, men of science, teachers, and editors of the public press with Thy truth. Bless and prosper all schools and seminaries of sound learning, and hasten the time when all shall know Thee from the least even to the greatest. Amen."

Another hymn introduced the sermon, and then I found that the lady who presided at the gasping harmonium had been giving us a sort of overture, in which the different tunes we were to sing had been introduced, "preluding the way in which our thoughts should wander," as some poet says.

Reading over again the portion of St. Matthew, tenth chapter, down as far as the verse—"Freely ye have received, freely give," Mr. Antill said we had little of the character of the Apostles given us in the New Testament, except what might be inferred from their conduct; but, after all, conduct was a better criterion of character than words. Let us, he said,

investigate the duties they had to perform; their characters would be shown in the way they did it.

With regard to the position of Jesus and the Apostles, the Jews were at that time subject to the Romans, whose laws were widely different from their own. The Jews considered their own laws perfection; and some persons expected that a Redeemer would come who should deliver them from their captivity. Christ was born "in a mysterious kind of a way," and some thought he was to be the King of the Jews. "Of this man," little was known until He was thirty years of age, and on this little no reliance could be placed. There was nothing against Him in the accounts which had been received into the Canon. We had not got the whole life of Christ. There were, however, certain other gospels omitted from "this book called the Holy Bible," in one of which it was asserted that Christ had miraculous power from his very infancy; and that, on one occasion, a boy, who pushed against Christ accidentally, was struck dead by Him. The compilers of the Canon evidently thought this was better omitted. So it was with regard to the Apostles; we had not their whole lives. We had, in fact, very little.

They left their "businesses" to follow Christ. Some were fishermen, some makers of nets (*sic*). Matthew was a publican—a position which was not desirable. In fact, Mr. Antill added, summarily, "there was not a respectable man in the whole lot."

It was just as in David's time: all those who were in debt or disgrace cast in their fortunes with Him; so Christ was surrounded by ignorant men, and men the reverse of respectable.

What did we find were their motives for joining Him? Why, all expected to gain something. They were distinctly told that, if they left their homes and families they should have tenfold more in this world, and in the next, life everlasting. They were men who had everything to gain and nothing to lose. They preferred an easy life of preaching to a hard one of fishing. "Follow me," said Christ, "and I will make you fishers of men!"

They were to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. They were not, that is, to benefit mankind, but simply to get adherents for the new kingdom. They were told to heal the sick and raise the dead. Now these assumed miracles could only be pretended to be done in the midst of an ignorant people. If they ever had been performed, why were they not still? We were told the age of miracles was past; "but," said the preacher, "I want to know when they ceased, and what authority there is for saying so." However, they were to go and get adherents for this new and happy kingdom, where God alone should rule, and where these Apostles should be governors of the Twelve Tribes. They were to go only to the Lost Tribes. There were to be no foreigners, and that was what the Jews were still

desiring. "What I object to," said Mr. Antill, "is the utter selfishness which marked their mission. They were only to have one coat and *stick*. They were to put no money in their purses; and then they were to go and tell people if they did not give them everything they wanted they were as bad as the people of Sodom." If they had been—as they were nowadays represented—sent to preach repentance without money and without price, the case would have been different; but they were taken from hard work and told to go to the best houses in the cities to which they travelled, and if the householder refused them they were to curse him; if he received them their peace was to rest upon him.

After some time these men began to inquire more particularly into the new kingdom. Two of them sought high positions in it; and the rest were very angry with them for doing so. They were promised Twelve Thrones on which they should sit and judge the Twelve Tribes. "If there is any Christian here who can show me that these men did not work from interested motives," said the preacher again, "I shall be very much obliged to him."

But in the sequel what sort of men did they show themselves? Rank cowards. Directly Christ got into difficulties, they all ran away. Now we could scarcely believe that if Christ had done miracles among them, they would have adopted this course. They were not mere Disciples, or Learners; they were

Apostles who, having been educated by Christ, were qualified to be sent forth to instruct others. But when Peter was recognised "by his brogue in the justice-room," he swore he knew nothing about Christ. "We are told," he said, "to have respect for Peter," but he was a great coward. We can place no dependence on such men. It was evident they did not believe him. The predictions of the crucifixion which we find in the Gospels must have been written after the event, because it took them by surprise. They did not understand the Kingdom of Heaven themselves; how could they go and preach it? What is this Kingdom of God, of which we are at one time told that it is "within us," at another that it is a Happy Place elsewhere; and yet again that it is in this world? No reliance can be placed on the history or the teaching of these Apostles. We want salvation—yes: but it is salvation from sin and its consequences; salvation from poverty, which shall prevent some of us from starving while others are rolling in wealth; salvation from the difficulties and troubles with which we are surrounded. This will never come while we believe that Christ loves us; it will only arrive when we have learnt to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Such are the outlines of a long sermon which was delivered quite extempore; and, at its conclusion, the preacher abruptly left his pulpit, took his two brass candlesticks and tumbler with him, and came down to

the table on the lower platform. The discussion was now to commence. This preacher, at all events, was no occupant of Coward's Castle. I could not help wondering how our curate would like to come down from his rostrum into the chancel, and let the congregation 'argufy' with him on his previous twenty minutes' original composition!

First of all, an exceedingly weak opponent on the Christian side got up, and attempted to define the Kingdom of God, though he could not give the references he quoted. I do not for one moment suppose Mr. Antill "laid on" this gentleman or any of those who followed, but really the opposite case could not have broken down more lamentably had they been in collusion. Why does not the Christian Evidence Society send some really good man to cope with these people in their own strongholds? I fancy from his manner this first speaker must have been a Dissenting preacher of some very humble denomination.

Then rose up a modest gentleman in the audience who required a good deal of persuasion to get him to the platform, and who, on being asked the customary question as to which side he took, said, "No side at all," and moved the Advanced Unitarians to much mirth by his reply. But he had a good deal to say, and said it well. I should mention that the congregation, which had been very small at first, had now grown into quite a large one. The penny seats at the back were well filled, and our more aristocratic ones

very fairly so. The cat who had sat by my side up to this point, seemed to feel that her presence was no longer necessary to keep up appearances, and quietly went to sleep on a lady's lap who sat next to me.

The speaker, who was a stranger, and had merely dropped in *en passant*, confessed that he was disappointed. First of all he heard a service which was nothing more or less than a plagiarism from the Church of England prayers; then came a lecture, the object of which seemed to be to throw overboard Christ and the Apostles. As to what the last speaker had said on the orthodox side, he confessed he did not understand him. If God ruled the heart, why did He not keep men from sin? If they were born in sin, sin had become nature to them, and it was no use washing in blood (here the Advanced Unitarians discovered for the first time that they had got a friend, not a foe, in this humorous gentleman, and applauded him vociferously). "What *is* sin?" he went on to ask; "and how could Christ expiate sin in advance? I can't tell how He does it!" There was, of course, a great field for eloquence on the subject of sin and expiation; but what did it all amount to? (again he was vigorously applauded). He had said his say. He only objected to the singularity of the Church Service. The end of the proceedings appeared to him much better than the beginning. He hoped to come again.

Mr. Antill said in explanation, that "after the manner which men called heresy" they worshipped

God. They only occupied the Hall from October to April, so that their tenancy would soon cease until the autumn.

Then got up a vigorous gentleman whom I had noticed for his stentorian singing. He said that he was partly a Radical and partly a Conservative. He had "conserved" the ideas of God and a future life, the excellence of the character of Jesus, with the good tendencies of the Bible and the teaching of the Apostles. It might be that the majority of the Apostles were uneducated, but Luke (whom he gratuitously elected to the Apostolate) was not. He also believed that Jesus Christ was an educated man. It was a question whether the High Priest himself was not his father. At all events, when only twelve years of age, He was able to argue with the doctors in the Temple. Therefore His influence was not wonderful; but, to be influenced, the men themselves who were so influenced must have had *something in them.* Their ideas were crude at first, but they soon became imbued with the "semi-sacred" character of Jesus. That was how he regarded Him; not as God—that was too ridiculous to be talked about. God was, he thought, an "atmosphere," or an "essence" like electricity. Christ was clever, good, and—he had no doubt—beautiful. He believed Christ had that same kind of manly beauty which Garibaldi had, which gave him the power of leading men. There was, he believed, this personal charm of

appearance and manner on the part of Jesus which was so "catching," but, he repeated, there must have been something akin in these Apostles. Originally they might have been rude, but they must have been gifted with genius. "I am nothing," said this speaker, in some fine nervous sentences, "unless I am a red-hot Radical and Republican; and I take these Apostles as delegates from the people. Neither they nor Jesus knew their own minds at first. They were enthusiastic, and enthusiasm is the insanity of genius. They tried a worldly kingdom first, but this would not do. Then the idea was changed to a spiritual kingdom, and they grumbled and asked, "What are you going to do for us?" Judas was the most practical of them all. He would have been the Bismarck of the new kingdom. He didn't want money. He sold His Master for eighteen shillings when he might have had eighteen hundred pounds. It was only his practical mode of appeal against the disruption of his dreams of a temporal kingdom! This speaker thought the Twelve Apostles interesting and poetical. They wanted to go in for a public career, but they got tinctured with the teachings of Jesus, and went "mooning about holding prayer-meetings." Against this Judas rebelled. He said to Christ, "*Be* a Garibaldi. Go ahead. I'll see you through it." Time was up; and this, the best of all the speakers, though apparently, like the rest, a working man, could only repeat that he thought the

Apostles interesting characters, "even if not the most worthy in the world."

A simple man, the best on the Christian side, succeeded, and claimed *fairness* for the character of Christ. He empannelled these twelve men as a jury to test His claims. The speaker went through several of the list *seriatim*, and examined their qualifications. First there was John. He was not scientific, but he was pre-eminently a good man; and a good man readily detects imposture. So too there was his brother James—named the Just; a name he would not have earned but by similarity of character. The Zebedee family could not have been so poor either, for when they were called they left their ships "with the hired men." Then there was Peter; and from what we knew of his character, we were quite sure he was not a man to be gulled. There was Matthew; and Matthew was a publican—not in the sense the *National Reformer* took it, that he kept a ginshop, but he was a collector of taxes; and if you wanted a hard-headed man, he said, you could not do better than select somebody in the tax-gathering line. There was Philip, a regular materialist, who said "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Then came Thomas the sceptic—and so on. Now this jury believed the claims of Christ. They believed that He was what He represented Himself to be.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and proceedings had commenced about half-past seven. Up to this point

they had been dignified and orderly—heterodox, of course, but still in keeping with the gravity of the question. At this point they degenerated from dialectics into low comedy, and I left without waiting for Mr. Antill's reply. Before I did so a gentleman, who was evidently of the Jewish persuasion, told us—as far as I could gather from his exceedingly Hebraic pronunciation—about Abraham (*sic*) being burned in the fiery furnace and Daniel thrown to the lions, adding some remarks about Christ's father being a "clergyman," which were meant to be funny, but only reached the point of being indecent. Another man with a falsetto voice followed in the same strain, which did not interest me, so I left him speaking.

I was sorry to have my previous good impressions of the decorum which prevailed even in so unmistakably heterodox a gathering dissipated by the uncouth and silly antics of this final brace of buffoons: the last remark that offended my ears as I went out, but which, I am sorry to say, gave unlimited delight to the audience, was a squeak on the part of the husky man, to the effect that the Apostles were simply "cadgers."

I hesitated for some time whether I should name the Gower Street folks "Aggressive" Unitarians, instead of calling them by their self-chosen appellation. I decided to let the latter stand. There is an Ishmaelitish tone about the proceedings of the subterranean dancing academy, however, which is scarcely

philosophical, and certainly not to my taste. This is discernible even in the very announcement which accompanies their lecture-list:—

"Many people think we cannot have any reasonable objection to Christian doctrines which has not been satisfactorily answered, nor any argument against the truth of the Bible, that has not been refuted.

"The following illustration will, we think, dispel this illusion:—

"How is it the 'Glad tidings of Salvation,' which cost so much to propagate, are rejected, while a general invitation to a free dinner or supper would be accepted by thousands? Because the Christian doctrine is untrue; it is not even taught by Christ in the Gospels, but only by Paul and the other writers of the Epistles.

"It cannot be true, for experience proves every transgressor personally suffers for his sin, and though God forgives much, He could not do so if He accepted an atonement. Moreover, if it were possible for Jesus to expiate crime, it must be obvious God must then forgive the sinner, whether he believes in Christ or not. Faith in Christ is therefore worthless. If such arguments as these can be refuted, Christians having the ability should attend our meetings, and do so. It is not enough to say 'Objections have been answered;' the faith must continue to be defended, or it will soon be rejected. This fact alone proves it is not of Divine origin."

NOCTES SOCRATICÆ.

EVENINGS WITH THE LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY.

I.

A Debate on Cremation.

Any account of Heterodox London which should fail to include a notice of the Dialectical Society would indeed be like the tragedy of Hamlet minus the *rôle* of the Royal Dane. Unimportant in mere numerical strength—that most fallacious of all tests—and not recognised among the "regular" Societies, the Dialecticians elect to become the embodiment of "irregularity." Their boast is that they are secular in the fullest sense of the word; self-emancipated from those "rules" which to other Societies are possibly a badge of respectability, but certainly a source of restraint. Consequently, their very first principle is freedom of discussion; and the only pledge required of members is that, in the true spirit of the dialectic method, they would accept nothing as proved except as the conclusion of a logical argument. In the forefront of their prospectus, issued some six or seven years ago, they put the following quotation from Professor Bain:—

"The essence of the dialectic method is to place,

side by side with every doctrine and its reasons, all opposing doctrines and their reasons, allowing these to be stated in full by the persons holding them. No doctrine is to be held as expounded, far less proved, unless it stands in parallel array to every other counter theory, with all that can be said for each. For a short time this system was actually maintained and practised; but the execution of Socrates gave it its first check, and the natural intolerance of mankind rendered its continuance impossible. Since the Reformation, struggles have been made to regain for the discussion of questions generally—philosophical, political, moral, and religious—the two-sided procedure of the law courts, and perhaps never more strenuously than now."

This they follow up with the annexed statement of their object and method. The whole prospectus is too long to print, but it is fairly summarized in these sentences:—

"The London Dialectical Society will have effected much good, if, by its means, persons are made to feel that to profess a belief on a disputed question with regard to which they refuse to examine the evidence, is an act altogether unworthy of a rational being; and that the only method of arriving at truth is by submitting one's opinions to the test of unsparing and adverse criticism. Freedom of speech and thought are, not less than personal freedom, the natural birthright of all mankind. To refrain from uttering

opinions because they are unpopular, betokens a certain amount of moral cowardice,—engendered by long-continued persecution. To state fearlessly the truth, or what we believe to be the truth, even though it be held only by a few, is the act of all who consider the exercise of private judgment a right, and the extension of human knowledge a duty. But society generally has not yet reached such a state of progress as to allow individuals to give expression to their honest and deliberate convictions, without inflicting upon them penalties more or less severe. The effect of this is to deter men from expressing opinions, which might be corrected if erroneous, and accepted if true. In the London Dialectical Society, however, not only will no person suffer obloquy on account of any opinion he may entertain or express, but he will be encouraged to lay before his fellow-members the fullest exposition of his views. Even if this were not so, it is to be hoped that members of the Society will possess sufficient moral courage to disregard, in the interests of truth, that social tyranny—the weapon of ignorance and intolerance."

> "They are slaves who will not choose
> Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
> Rather than in silence shrink
> From the truth they needs must think.
> They are slaves who dare not be
> In the right with two or three."

The Dialectical Society's Report on Modern Spiritualism is a good instance of the freedom and fairness

with which they "tackled" an unpopular subject; and rumours from time to time reach the outer world of papers read by Lord Amberley, Mr. Bradlaugh, Dr. Drysdale, and others, on subjects usually tabooed by common consent, in which it is said—and I have reason to know, with truth—that the fair sex bear their part in a very outspoken manner indeed.

The Dialecticians have led rather a nomade life, having first of all been quartered in George Street, Hanover Square, where they occupied the rooms of the Medical Association for their debates on alternate Wednesdays. After some wanderings, they seem to have settled down at No. 1, Adam Street, Adelphi, nearly opposite the Junior Garrick Club; and there, at fortnightly intervals, gather the boldest spirits of London to discuss all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. It was at the last of those three divisions I selected a subject, when I determined to renew my old acquaintance with the Dialectical Society, to hear a paper read by Mr. G. de M. Soares, on the subject of "Cremation," which had surged up to the surface a short time since in Sir Henry Thompson's paper, answered by Dr. Holland, each in the *Contemporary Review*, and on which subject I had been given to understand Mr. Soares possessed some special knowledge. I found a full attendance of—I should say—a hundred people, the sexes pretty well divided, and many of the ladies being so young that one rejoiced to see them thus reversing the violation of

Bona Dea's mysteries. After some preliminary matters had been settled, Dr. Charles Drysdale was called to the chair, and Mr. Soares, who was evidently a foreign gentleman, read his paper.

The treatise, which was exceedingly able and exhaustive, dealt with the various arguments in favour of cremation over inhumation, and combated, with the greatest fairness, all the arguments that had been advanced against it. The sentimental and religious objections he dealt very gently with, and argued the question on its merits as preventing that poisonous malaria which resulted from surface burial, and the equally deleterious result to sewerage and springs when the grave was deep. He bristled with statistics, and abounded in felicitous illustration, honestly stating that he was intentionally guilty of plagiarism through a wish to quote all possible authorities in favour of his subject rather than miss one argument through straining after originality. The following is the paper *in extenso*:—

"Civilization in its active sense is but a synonym for reform; and of all kinds of reform none are more truly worthy of consideration than those affecting sanitary improvements. In this country, distinguished above all others for a tenacious adherence to old customs—no matter how absurd, injurious, or reprehensible—the progress of reform has always been slow. Yet if ever there was a subject calculated to arouse public attention and quicken the energies of

philanthropists or demand the consideration of the legislature, it is the pernicious custom of the interment of our dead as practised by us in common with all countries recognised as belonging to the category of civilized nations.

"I propose, therefore, without further preamble, first, to consider, in reference to this subject, whether a reform in the usual method of disposing of our dead is desirable, and, if it be, what change or improvement is the most advisable.

"Dialecticians will, I am sure, congratulate me on having been able to avail myself of the diametrically opposed, but valuable opinions of such eminent authorities as Sir Henry Thompson, and Mr. Philip H. Holland, M.R.C.S., and Medical Inspector of Burials in England and Wales. Sir Henry Thompson's attack on the present system and his advocacy of Cremation received such general publicity, appearing as they did in the *Contemporary Review*, whence they were copied into many of our daily journals, that I should not have thought it worth our while this evening to discuss the evils of burial had not Mr. Holland, in the next number of the *Review*, denied their existence. Now on this subject Mr. Holland must surely be held as an authority; but, on the other hand, we must regard his *expressed* opinions with considerable caution, inasmuch as, in his position of Medical Inspector of Burials, it was clearly his duty to have thoroughly investigated the subject from the

commencement of his inspectorship; and, if he had become convinced of the necessity of reform, it was as clearly his duty to have advocated it long ago, and not to have left it to Sir Henry Thompson, as an *amicus curiæ*, to expose his shortcomings by implication.

"In fact, he says, 'I submit that I have a fair claim to a hearing, that I may try and show that much of my work during the last twenty years has not been misdirected, and that I, and those with whom and for whom I have acted, have neither induced nor encouraged an enormous waste of public money in establishing new and large cemeteries.'

"Having thus exposed the probable bias of his opinions, let us cautiously examine his statements. He says:—'The real danger from a well-situated and well-managed cemetery, large in proportion to the number of its burials, is not greater than from a well-managed railway, and it would be hard to find in either any but the very rarest instances of injury sustained, except from palpable mismanagement.'

"The simple fact is, according to his opinion, that it is not so much the burial as the *unburial* of the dead that is dangerous, including, of course, in that term the disturbance of soil impregnated with putrefying, but not yet putrefied animal matter; but that in cemeteries of ample size there is as little temptation and no excuse for incurring this risk, as that of placing in the soil a larger quantity of putrescible matter than the earth and the plants it bears will completely

absorb, or than the air carried down by rain or dew will thoroughly decompose.'

"So far, although he is not quite right, he is not very far wrong; but the question is, what would be the dimensions of a cemetery large in proportion to the number of its burials? And are such cemeteries obtainable in such countries as ours? I answer, most unhesitatingly—No! It is only a question of time for every waste spot to be utilized for food-production or for shelter, and, even as a question of economy, I may say that devoting tracts of land to the burial of our dead, large in proportion to the burials—so large as really to obviate the *perceptible* and traceable pernicious effects—is an affair involving enormous expense, which cannot fail to increase as time goes on and land becomes more and more valuable. But, says Mr. Holland, these cemeteries ought to be utilized as ornamental places like the parks and squares of London. In that case we should pay very dearly for very melancholy ornaments; and when he further states 'that it would be in the highest degree desirable, if not indispensably necessary, that large open spaces should be reserved for health and exercise,' he surely ignores the fact that although the existence of large cemeteries may not be perceptibly injurious, in reality they are so, and therefore exercise in burial places cannot fail to be the very reverse of healthy. We do not wish to be poisoned in the gardens of our estate. Parliamentary reports of the last few years tell us that

these cemeteries, of which Mr. Holland must have been Inspector, are becoming rapidly as bad as the pest-breathing graveyards they supplanted. In one especially, in the North of London, although the surface is pretty well kept, yet underneath it is one mass of corruption in the parts occupied.

"It was indisputably demonstrated before Select Committees of the House of Commons nearly thirty years ago, by such eminent authorities as Dr. Prout, Dr. James Copland, and Dr. Chambers, that burial of the dead in spots surrounded by the living was most injurious to the health of the community, and invariably productive of low fever of a typhoid character; and the result was that thenceforward the manufactories of pestilence and disease were removed a few miles from the large centres of our population, in entire disregard of the fact that our population doubles itself every thirty years, and must inevitably overlap these projected cemeteries just about the time when they would be filled with as many dead bodies and as much virulent poison as they could conveniently hold. Extraordinary as it may appear as a fact, it may be stated that, like the railways in America, the large cemeteries of England induce the settlement of population around them; who cluster there perhaps because the land is cheaper, ignoring that the locale is the most dangerous they can choose. This is not a matter of conjecture—it can be proved *now*, as it has been proved over and over again, that certain gases are

evolved from the decomposing bodies, which act as deadly poisons on the human constitution. Sir Henry Thompson tells us that 'the process of decomposition affecting an animal body is one that has a disagreeable, injurious, often fatal, influence on the living man, if sufficiently exposed to it. Thousands of human lives have been cut short by the poison of slowly decaying, and often diseased, animal matter. Even the putrefaction of some of the most insignificant animals has sufficed to destroy the noblest.' Sir Benjamin Brodie, whom no one can suspect of exaggeration, went further than this, and explained to a Parliamentary Committee that the gas evolved from putrid bodies is chiefly sulphuretted hydrogen, a gas so noxious and deadly that the admixture of only *one* part of it with five hundred parts of atmospheric air is almost immediately fatal. It was also proved beyond the shadow of doubt by many competent and scientific witnesses, before the same Committee, that the escape of this noxious effluvium from the surface of burial-places *is*, despite of Mr. Holland's opinion to the contrary, under any circumstances inevitable; and that these emanations are of a most offensive and malignant character, producing various ailments, lowering the tone of health, and causing headache, diarrhœa, dysentery, sore throat, low fever, and other sicknesses. These exhalations may be imperceptible to the smell, but they are not on that account less certainly existent and injurious. Even

lead coffins cannot prevent the escape of these terrible gases from decomposing bodies, for they are evolved with such force and in such quantities, that the lids of such coffins, notwithstanding the atmospheric and earth pressure, become convex and are ultimately burst open. The more deeply a body is placed in the earth the more slowly will putrefaction proceed, but none the less surely. Sir Henry Holland explained admirably how impossible it is for us to change the ultimate results of the workings of Nature. She will have her own way—we may retard or change the process, but sooner or later our bodies must resolve into their original elements; these are water, carbonic acid, and ammonia, and the mineral constituents more or less oxidized, elements of the earth's structure, lime, phosphorus, iron, sulphur, and magnesia. 'To this end we must come,' and, in the process, it matters no jot how slowly or in what manner we solve the problem: these poisonous gases must be generated, and layers of earth, many feet in thickness, can no more intercept the transmission of gases to the surface than they can by their density prevent the infiltration of water. The one ascends, the other descends, through a permeable medium. The gases must, in the course of time, inevitably pass into the atmosphere, and even if the gas be impeded from coming to the surface by the depth of the soil, there is only the greater danger of its escape by deep drainage, and the pollution of springs. Twelve-thirteenths of every

dead body must dissipate, that is, pass off in the form of a most offensive gas, many thousand times the bulk of the body which produces it, and it is impossible to prevent these exhalations from entering into the lungs, and, consequently, corrupting the blood of every human being exposed to their pernicious influence, unless, indeed, vegetation completely absorbed them, as suggested by Mr. Holland. But to effect this desired consummation the vegetation on the spot would require to be many hundred times greater than is possible in our cemeteries. So there Mr. Holland's defence of cemeteries entirely breaks down. And who shall pretend to fathom the secret workings of these poisons when once they have escaped from their producing agencies? Who shall say that the putrid exhalations of decaying animal matter are confined to the source whence they sprang?

"Healthy persons exposed to the atmosphere which surrounds receptacles of the dead have often either contracted specific diseases or suffered various derangements of their general health, which morbid poisons are known to produce; its effects are varied both in kind and in intensity, from mere headache or nausea to the most violent form of pestilential fever. This is peculiarly noticeable in old cathedral towns and in country parsonage-houses which adjoin churches, where, if anywhere, vegetation is likely to be particularly luxuriant. I may here pray you,

ladies and gentlemen, to believe that I am not making these statements without authority. Every word that I utter I have taken from my own articles, written years ago on the reports of the Parliamentary Committee, or else from a very able digest of them in the *Rectangular Review*, from which I have not hesitated freely to copy verbatim, seeing that it gives chapter and verse for its every statement. I plead entirely guilty to the charge of wholesale plagiarism and cribbing, for I care nothing for originality or eloquence so long as I can place the main and most important facts plainly before you.

"But to resume. The practice of reopening family graves and vaults for the purpose of interring members of the same family close to each other, and thereby permitting the gas of bodies as yet undecomposed to escape immediately to the surface, is dangerous in the extreme, and numerous instances can be adduced of mourners being suddenly stricken with overpowering sickness at the side of reopened graves.

"We learn from Haller that a church was infected by the exhalations of a single body, and that this corpse occasioned a very dangerous disease in a whole convent. Raulin relates that sensitive persons have become ill and faint after having been attacked with cadaverous exhalations when walking in the vicinity of Père la Chaise.

"Mr. Chadwick, in his report, mentions that in the case of the predominance of smell from a burial-

ground, the immediate consequence ordinarily noted is a headache. These are high authorities, and there are many others to testify to analogous facts of this nature.

"A military officer of undoubted position and standing states that, when his men occupied as a barrack a building two miles from a burial-ground in Liverpool, the smell was at times, when the wind blew from that direction, most offensive, and that he and his men suffered consequently from dysentery.

"In Minchinhampton, in 1843, some of the soil of a burial-ground was sold for manure for the neighbouring gardens. Wherever it had been taken fever and death followed, and the place was literally decimated.

"A similar incident is recorded of a town called Kelione, fourteen miles from Cairo. Mons. Pariset, President of a Commission sent by the French Government into Egypt to inquire into the cause of the plague, attributes it to emanations from buried human bodies.

"We may hide corruption from our sight, and deem it, therefore, innocuous, but how fatally are we deceived? Mother Earth, like an awful Nemesis, arises sooner or later, and avenges her befouled and desecrated bosom by slaying the violators of her purity.

"The cholera, which takes its rise in India, is attributed by men of science to the evil of interment there, where the earth having imbibed the putrid sanies from millions of corpses has become one vast

hotbed of pestilential infection. Rome was healthy in the old days, but the burying of bodies has converted the smiling gardens of the Campagna into the desolate and abandoned plains which, breathing disease, surround the Eternal City. Sir James Murray proved beyond doubt that negative electricity pervaded this vast laboratory of malaria, and drew away the positive electricity from the living creatures in immediate contact with the earth and air of that fatal and extended trough or galvanic pile afforded by a graveyard.

"Thus far I believe I have shown the necessity of reform by demonstrating the dangers to which our present system of disposing of our dead inevitably exposes us.

"Is it necessary to dwell upon the other evils of the system? The whole aspect of things as they now are is shocking to pure taste and sensibility, a scandal and an outrage upon humanity. What with the ghastly and barbarous trappings supplied by the undertaker and his satellites, the vulgar ostentation so severely satirized by Charles Dickens and others, predominates more and more in these sacred rites, which in their spirit are most abhorrent of them. Seven millions are annually spent in the United Kingdom alone upon these mockeries and mummeries, not 'on the storied urn of monumental affection,' but wasted on silk scarves and brass nails, white napkins and velvet palls, feathers and flunkies, kid gloves and

gin for the monstrous mutes, black cloth and satin for the wanton worm.

"The pride, pomp, and circumstance of the funeral is a bitter jest, a biting sarcasm. How often have the slender shares of the widow and orphan been diminished in order to testify, and so unnecessarily, their loving memory of the deceased by display of plumes and silken scarves about the unconscious clay. Sir Henry Holland says that not a few deaths have been clearly traceable to the attendance at the burial-ground with uncovered head and damp-struck feet in pitiless weather at that chilling rite of sepulture. But I do not require to aid my case by such fatal instances as might be averted by umbrellas, comforters, and goloshes. It is strong enough as it is. I think I have proved reform in the matter of disposing of our dead to be desirable; it remains now for me to show in what direction improvement might be attained. Let me answer at once, By Cremation. I will not stay to consider the process of mummification, which after all but preserves the hideousness of death; nor will I stop to consider the Parsee method of placing the bodies of their dead upon a grill, as I have witnessed it at the Towers of Silence in Bombay, where the hawks and vultures pick off the flesh until the naked bones fall through the bars into the pit beneath, while the gorged and glutted cormorants slowly wing their way to the surrounding groves to digest their awful feast.

"I shall presently speak on the subject of sentiment, which I allow in the cases of mummification and the Parsee method to be a sufficient reason for their rejection; for the most brutal-minded must admit that it is awfully shocking to permit the bodies of those whom in life we have loved to be eaten after death, whether by birds, marine animals, or worms; and if only for this reason I would at once condemn the far-fetched idea which might be suggested by disposing of our dead by sinking them to the bottom of the sea—although on the grounds of expense and inconvenience this method would be equally objectionable.

"Imagine the cost of transporting our dead to the coast, shipping them in a sepulchral gondola. Realize the inconvenience to the mourners, who would be loth to leave their loved ones to the tender mercies of paid strangers. We need not stop to consider, nor will I ask you to picture to yourselves the nausea of the survivors nor the sea-sickness of the parson while the service was being read on board.

"No other method seems practicable but Cremation, which at least dispenses with the ghastly horrors of human bodies affording a feast to ravenous birds, fishes, or maggots. It appears to be the right thing from every point of view—sanitary, mythic, symbolic. Its history has a deep ethnic significance. I learn from a great authority on these matters that Cremation seems to have been altogether an Aryan (that is,

Japhetic) practice, hence it is that we and the Germans, who are Shemitic, are so careful to lay up our 'carcases in high places,' the Shemites having ever been reverentially careful of the body after death, stowing it away in caves and rocks until its resurrection.

"On the other hand, the Suranian (that is, Khamitic) Egyptians went wrong in this, as in all else, and seemed even to doubt the revivifying power of Isis if the body were not made incorruptible by pitch and resin. The Aryan practice, however, was, as I learn, that of Cremation, so that the system I advocate has at least antiquity to recommend it.

"It may not here be out of place to consider that in the disposal of the dead has originated the notions of Hell entertained by the Orthodox. We hear of weeping and wailing, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and in mythology we find that vultures were inhabitants of Hades, and that their mission was to prey on the livers of the wicked. Weeping and wailing are intimately associated with funerals. Worms belong to Shemitic or Hebrew interments—Fire, to Aryan or Roman Cremation—and Vultures point to Persian and Parsee practice.

"Would it be to consider too curiously to suppose that the rhetorical necessity for a Heaven produced houris, harps, and happiness?

"The only utility of such speculations is to show on what frail foundations we rest our hopes and fears.

"But as to Cremation. The method I would propose would be this. The body, as usual, should be placed in a coffin of wood, and taken to the spot where the ceremony could be performed with all desired religious rites. It should then be placed, coffin and all, into a sort of oven, and the door securely fastened. The coffin should then rest on a sort of rack of iron bars, of which a section would be V-shaped, so constructed that flames could pass on all sides through the bars which would keep the body from falling into the furnace, and would collect the ashes in a small trough or groove at the bottom. Above the oven would rise a great shaft, like the chimneys of our factories, and beneath it should be a furnace ready lighted. Immediately the door was closed certain flues should be opened and others shut, so as to compel the flames and the great heat of the furnace to ascend through the resting-place of the coffin into the shaft. Sir Henry Holland tells us three and a half hours are required to consume a body: by the means I propose ten minutes would suffice to reduce the biggest man, the Claimant himself, to twenty or thirty ounces of ashes.

"The sulphuretted-hydrogen gas would be generated as usual. The deadly fumes would be evolved, but being highly inflammable, ere they reached the mouth of the shaft they would be consumed and converted into harmless or comparatively harmless air, which, at the altitude at which it emerged from the shaft

would be blown about to the four corners of the heavens and robbed of its power to hurt or to destroy.

"What now are the objections to this method—cost? We spend seven millions annually on our funerals, and Sir Henry Thompson calculates a profit of 800,000*l.* might be made by selling the ashes of our relations. But let us dismiss this objection, although untenable. Who can weigh money against health?—economy against Death? I believe Sir Henry is wrong. We would not sell our fathers' bones; and from ignorance we probably shall still continue our monstrous fooleries of horses and hearses, mutes and mummeries. The expense, if you please, shall be greater than ever. What of that? We shall buy lives. Can any price be too great? Where thousands die now thousands shall live then.

"Let us not stop to weigh lucre against love, but go on to consider the other objections.

"Says a clever writer in the *Echo*, 'Poison would with such a practice become secure from detection. Could the poisoner once secure the cremation of his victim, it is obvious that the traces of crime would be for ever lost in nine cases out of ten.' To this Sir Henry Thompson answers, that we might preserve suspicious stomachs! And the *Echo* retorts with truth, that it is really curious that a man so exceedingly able and gifted as this eminent surgeon can be so completely absorbed in the labours of his profession as to ignore the common motives and sentiments

of every-day practical life, up to the point of suggesting such as scheme as this, which would either prove a dead letter, and so nullify the proposed precaution against crime, or else turn hundreds of homes into arenas of the most furious contentions and indignant protestations. Let us just conceive any elderly relative, father or uncle, dying in London a little more quickly than was anticipated, and a brother or nephew telegraphing from Edinburgh or Liverpool—"Keep his stomach!" Or a married daughter in the next street signifying to the wife or doctor in attendance at the deathbed that she desires the little "precaution" concerning the viscera to be carefully observed before the body is committed to the furnace? Will anybody picture the state of general confidence and affection likely to subsist in that happy family-circle ever after? Or, on the other hand, if it be the medical attendant on whom would chiefly rest the onus of making the needful requisition. We should like to know how many people would engage the services of a gentleman who had twice or three times been known in families, where he had been the confidential adviser, to insist on the process in question, and desire that old Mrs. Robinson's inside should be preserved, lest poor dear old Mr. Robinson, who loved her as the apple of his eye, might be found to have administered arsenic in her tea; and to intimate by his request in the case of Miss Brown, that he thought her landlady Mrs. Green had put her out of the world. The thing

is absolutely impracticable. There can be no selection of bodies, between bodies to be eviscerated and not to be eviscerated, unless in the very few cases of strong and obvious suspicion entertained by the bystanders at the time of death. As we know by experience that such suspicions in a large percentage of cases of poisoning have only come in force after a considerable interval has elapsed, and the spectators have had time to compare notes, we fear that we must continue to hold our position that, so far as the danger of such crime is concerned, the plan of Cremation still lies open to strong objection, which Sir H. Thompson's most unpractical letter has done nothing to remove.

"That may be Sir Henry Thompson's fault and not the fault of Cremation. I believe this objection also to be untenable.

"Out of 500 deaths 499 are the result of natural and well ascertained causes. But to guard against the remote contingency coroners might be empowered to order in suspicious cases that a post-mortem examination should be made before the Cremation of the body. Suspecting persons would thus have an opportunity of satisfying their doubts by simply appealing, with evidence, to the Coroner, and satisfying him that there were prima facie grounds for inquiry.

"But after all, the discovery of poison existing in a body is not the only or even the main evidence on which poisoners are generally convicted. Witness

the case of Madeline Smith and many others of equal celebrity.

"But why waste words on a matter so burlesque as Poisoning! Do they talk of poisoning? Oh, strainers at gnats and swallowers of camels! From the fear of permitting the exceedingly few criminal poisoners to go undetected and unpunished after their victims have suffered, do they propose innocently, very innocently, to poison thousands as they do now? Would they murder deliberately in order to prevent the possible increase of crime, consequent on the fear of detection being diminished?

"Oh, logical objectors, change your strain! Yet with such an argument as this with which to crush the frivolous objection, Sir Henry Thompson condescends to talk of preserving suspicious stomachs. Other objections are as easily disposed of. One suggests that Cremation is contrary to Christ's command, 'Let the dead bury their dead,' a precept never literally obeyed up to the present time, and impossible of accomplishment except by spiritual agency. Another doubts also on religious grounds—if we have the right to cause dead bodies to be burnt, as God has promised to raise up the same bodies glorified, and we render the fulfilment of the promise impossible by our own act. I would suggest a problem for the ingenious casuistry of these timid because superficial objectors.

"Let them reconcile, if they can, the resurrection

of the Noble Army of Martyrs who perished at the stake, and the apotheosis of their corporeal elements at the time of their sufferings, when, disfranchised and disenthralled by the purifying action of the flames, the carnal matter had soared to the empyrean in the form of gas, free as air and widespread as the heavens. Cannot these gases again be collected, condensed, and resume their former structure and shape, the mould of which is surely held by the Great Author of our being, even as in the mystic teachings of Eastern narrative we are taught that Genii, when released from the Solomon sealed coffer in which they had been confined by the Monarch of Wisdom, could at their will, after soaring to the heavens in a column of vapour, re-enter their close tenement in their captive form.

"But, mischievous metaphor and Orientalism apart, these martyrs were burnt; and I pause for objectors to tell me how the promise that their identical bodies shall be raised and glorified can be fulfilled.

"Is it worth while to reiterate that whether we burn or bury, the body must and does return to the same its original elements, at once or in a few years' time, after which it passes through numberless changes and metamorphoses—or to ask who can stultify the fiat of the *All Mighty?*

"Many other equally cogent objections are made, and are as easily disposed of. Only one is really

formidable, or, indeed, worth our attention—it is that of Sentiment!

"We may argue, we may discuss, we may give logical reasons and plausible inducements, but against the whole armoury of rhetoric and eloquence Sentiment rears her head unmoved, and doggedly maintains her own.

"It is not altogether obstinacy, but sentiment; it is entirely beyond the control of self, nor is it dependent on volition. We are the creatures of circumstances, inasmuch as not only our actions, but our idiosyncrasies and the peculiarities of our sentiment and opinion are beyond the results of circumstances. This is finely expressed by Voltaire in his tragedy of Zaire:—

> 'Les soins qu'on prend de notre enfance,
> Forment nos sentiments, nos mœurs, notre créance.
> J'eusse été, près du Ganges, esclave à faux dieux,
> Chrétienne à Paris, Mussulman en ces lieux—
> L'instruction fait tout!'

"It is true. Our early education forms our sentiments, our habits, and our beliefs. Instruction does it all; and if that instruction is false our sentiments become prejudices—than which nothing holds a stronger mastery over vulgar minds. 'You are only safe and free,' says Shakspeare, 'provided you weed your better judgments of all opinions that grow rank in them. Be cured of this diseased opinion betimes, for 'tis most dangerous.' And, again, 'Raze out rotten opinion when false opinion, whose wrong

thought defiles thee. Let thy just proof repeal and reconcile thee.'

"We have just proof; and in order to raze out the rotten opinion, the false sentiment, the vulgar prejudice, we must educate.

"It is, I grant, infinitely more difficult to destroy prejudice by instruction than to create it by false teaching, and for that reason I do not expect to change the custom of centuries in a day. It may require the era of a generation to eradicate the absurdly grotesque and hideously morbid sentiment that makes men embrace disease and shudder at safety. What of that? Begin at once, and the task will be sooner accomplished. Show those ignorant minds that what they call 'leaving their beloved ones at rest' is in reality leaving them to become the most appalling thing in creation; that while they are rearing flowers over the tomb, hideous worms are sweltering in the black putrid jelly beneath, and crawling over the awful skeleton and grinning skull, which is literally breathing death into the vitals of the bereaved and tender mourners in return for their solicitudes. Picture to them the awfully horrible aspect—the revolting form which their ignorant prejudice has forced the once tenderly loved clay to assume. Tell them more. Tell them by their own act they have converted the form once so well beloved into a plague, a pestilence, an active scourge, a messenger of death.

"Prove this to them through your men of science, through the teachings of their trusted instructors—and the good, the philanthropic, and the benevolent, revolting at the thought that they who have devoted their lives to beneficence and charity will after death become agents of destruction and enemies of humanity, will pray that their bodies may be less barbarously cared for. St. Paul says, 'Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, I am nothing.' The Apostle doubtless was contrasting fanaticism and the pure love; but were I antithetically to take his saying for my text, and contend that if we give not our bodies to be burnt we have not charity, and that though in our lives we may have been harmless well-wishers of our kind, and animated too with every principle of charity, not willingly doing a man wrong after death, by the disposition made of our bodies, we are made the cause of suffering, of lingering disease, and of death itself. So that, like Samson, who at his death slew more enemies than in his life, we, by the manner of our burial, whatever harm we may unconsciously have done our fellows while living is sadly and fearfully eclipsed at our demise.

"With the selfish and the brutal the argument to be offered for their consideration may be different, but the result will be the same. Careless what becomes of their own bodies when they have ceased to inhabit them, they will at least be anxious to escape danger and contagion while living. Self-

preservation is the first law of Nature, and it is only necessary that danger should be pointed out to make them anxious to avoid it. I believe that under the Burial Act we are *forced* to bury our dead. If that be so, the sooner that Act is repealed the better for the community at large and the civilization of the world.

"It is to be hoped that some of our Legislators will agitate this question, and protest against a continuance of the barbarism of our ancestors.

"It is monstrous that in the nineteenth century, despite the boasted progress of science and civilization, we should be eclipsed in our sanitary enactments by the practical wisdom and common sense of two thousand years ago.

"Cremation was practised by the Romans, and there is ample evidence that it was introduced by them into this country. That our then barbaric ignorance resisted innovation is not to be wondered at, but that we or other civilized nations should now, in this age of enlightenment, persist in our suicidal and murderous folly is inexplicable.

"The first thing to be done is to obtain leave to be sensible, to get an Act passed permitting the wise to dispose of their dead in a rational manner. Were this matter taken up as warmly as are many other social questions of the day, and year by year a measure proposed and persisted in, as in the case of the Jews' Disability, Electoral Reform, the Ballot, Mr. Miall's Church Dis-

establishment, or the Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill, popular feeling would be aroused, and repeated discussion would, like the continual dropping of water, wear away the rock of prejudice and ignorance which, I grant, *now* frowns upon it as a formidable obstacle, but which, in time, would irresistibly crumble under the teachings of reason and the considerations of safety.

"We shall hear, no doubt, that a few words in the Burial Service would have to be changed, that the practice of Incremation is heathenish and un-Christian; but the onus will lie on the other side to show what essential connexion exists between Christianity and burial, or between burning and heathenism. In the Spiritualists we shall have supporters, as I understand that the ghosts say that they rather prefer their old habitations to be burnt than not, as Cremation severs more completely and quickly than any other process the disagreeable connexion that continues, for a time, between the spirit and the clay.

"And surely support, active support, will come from the minds which yearn for healthy sentiment and true progress. However strong or instinctive may now be their dislike to Incremation, the moment they are convinced of the horrors following on interment they will perceive that, in reality, it is more soothing and consoling to know that the mortal remains of those we have loved and lost have been resolved into their original elements by fire—fire, the great purifier—fire, the master principle of life—fire, the essence of

the Creator—and thereby saved from the foulness of corruption and the feast of the worm; to know that the beloved form, once so fondly cherished and caressed, has been preserved from the loathsomeness of decay—the sweet features from the distortion of putrefaction. Would it not be a satisfaction to feel that death was disarmed of much that is terrible in its aspect—that the remains of our dearest friends could no longer become a poison, a pollution, and a pest? Instead of death being associated in our minds with what is unspeakably ghastly, foul and hideous, should we not rather dwell with calm delight on the thought that mortality had been cleansed and made Immortal by the Spirit of that Mighty Power which subdueth all things to itself; which can re-mould and reintegrate the corporeal atoms, or from the *néant* reproduce identity?

"Let this be preached from every pulpit, proclaimed in every family, and promulgated throughout the kingdoms of the earth—and in this most important item of reform let England lead the van."

Mr. Soares then read the following letter from a Spiritualist, which is interesting, as showing the views likely to be entertained on the subject of Cremation by that body:—

"Mr. G. de M. Soares,—I have read with interest your able Paper in support of the views of Sir Henry

Thompson, and in opposition to the fallacies of Dr. Holland.

"I have perused the contributions of those two gentlemen to the contemporary magazines, and I must say I came to the conclusion that Sir Henry is a pioneer of progress, and Dr. Holland a champion of vested interests in abuses of the most pernicious character. You have already made mincemeat of him, but I think that the process of commination may be carried a little further with advantage, and I think I see one or two lumps of fat which have escaped the chopper. I was in the Home Office when the Burial Acts were passed, and the reports on the old churchyards mostly passed through my hands. I think that if they were published, or such a selection of horrors as might easily be compiled from them, no one in their senses would ever again say a word against Cremation.

"I do not perceive a single sound argument in Dr. Holland's Paper in favour of the present system. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to retain it to utilize our present expensive cemeteries. The innocuous ashes and the funeral urns would still require a repository, and the cemeteries would be a convenient spot for the ceremony of Cremation. Then they would, if large, be infinitely more safe and serviceable than at present as recreation grounds and open spaces.

"The idea that we shall not be able, in some future time, to afford space for burial-grounds, when every

available spot will be required for food production, is simply chimerical; ere that time comes the atmosphere will no doubt be subjected to direct taxation and made to yield us food without the intervention of animal and vegetable laboratories.

"Dr. Holland disputes the danger of our present regulated system. He says the cases which from time to time come to light will be in their turn amended; but how much mischief will have been done before they come to light? The immunity secured by existing regulations is only comparative—Cremation would render it absolute.

"Dr. Holland is sure that we should never be willing to make merchandize of the ashes of our forefathers. But we should not be subject to the temptation. We should consign the fertilizing products of combustion as a free gift to the winds of Heaven, and the atmosphere enriched would return them gratuitously to Mother Earth.

"Dr. Holland thinks ocean burial would be preferable to Cremation. For my part, I think it would be as bad to be eaten by a shark as by a worm or by a vulture, and I should object to poisoning the waters as much as to poisoning the atmosphere. The plagues of the East have often been attributed to the horrible native practice of water-burial in the sacred rivers, and if the ocean were turned into a burial-ground, methinks our watering-places would no longer be attractive resorts.

"The non-detection of poison is alleged to be another argument against Cremation; but whoever relies on this fallacy must have forgotten that the spectroscope affords the very surest method of chemical analysis, and is equal to the detection of any vestige of poison in the process of Cremation.

"The prevalence of negative electricity in malarious places and cemeteries, and its quality of drawing off the positive electricity from living frequenters of these unhealthy spots, is not the only deleterious influence which emanates from them.

"The popular notions that cemeteries are ghost-haunted I verily believe to be founded on fact. I have evidence of it, which carries conviction to my mind. I have the evidence of a clergyman friend, a most satisfactory medium, who, contrary to the advice of invisible counsellors, visited a cemetery, and was subsequently haunted by the dark spirits who were attracted by the light of his mediumistic torch, and who subsequently caused him great trouble and annoyance.

"And I can adduce the extraordinary evidence of Mrs. Anderson, who was haunted by the ghost-squadrons of the Germans slain during the late war, and who were able to poison the atmosphere of her house by sulphuretted hydrogen, which she believed they drew from their festering corpses.

(Signed) "T. Herbert Noyes."

Then commenced the debate: but the misfortune was that all the Dialecticians and most of their visitors (who are courteously invited to take part in the discussion) seemed possessed with a common desire to be burned. Miss F. Fenwick Miller, a very young lady who spoke most lucidly and eloquently, plunged at once into her somewhat ghastly subject, and detailed the ancient modes of sepulture and incremation respectively. Christians had, in later ages, through a sentimental emotionalism, thought to keep the particles of their friends' bodies; but this was simply an impossibility. She added some very grim details indeed connected with the examination of ministers and officials under the commission of 1842, when the sexton of St. Sepulchre's Church told how, in carting away rubbish therefrom, somebody had knocked off the head of his—the sexton's—father, and he almost had to come to fisticuffs to regain possession of the paternal relic. She also told—in voice most musical—the weird story of another sexton who wanted to steal the ring from the finger of a buried lady, and had to bite the finger to get it off, when the lady proved not to be dead by getting up and walking home. From this she argued Incremation would be at once more decent and safer.

Mr. Truelove, the publisher, next regaled us with the story of a gentleman who ordered in his will that his body should be consumed in one of the Imperial Gas Company's retorts; but his pious wishes were

frustrated through the Company declining to allow their retorts to be used for the purpose. A brief discussion followed as to the legal right to dispose of one's own body, which did not seem to be clearly established; and one lady held out hopes of an opposition, by saying she would rather be stifled than burned; but she was a lady of few words (*mirabile dictu!*), and did not push her objection. Mr. Rivolta, too, a friend of the opener, who felt strongly on the sentimental side of the question, was asked to state his views, but kept his sentiments to himself. The assembly was either too unanimous or the opposition too diffident. Mr. Leveson, a gentleman of the Jewish persuasion, threw a dash of humour into his speech by observing the appropriateness of the day —*Ash* Wednesday—to the particular subject in hand, and made what really seemed an excellent suggestion, as if by way of amendment—viz., that many of the objections to inhumation would be removed by the compulsory and constant use of quick lime at burials, so as to secure rapid decomposition. But his proposal did not seem to carry weight with it, and it really seemed, as he said, that the Dialectical Society had made up its mind to be burned, and nothing else would satisfy it.

A brother of the opener followed with two transparently fictitious objections, set up, like ninepins, for the purpose of being knocked down. (1) If all the world should become converted, like the Dialectical

Society, where should we get our subjects for anatomization? (2) There was, he said, an insuperable objection to doing away with the malaria in churchyards, which he took to be the source of ghost stories. He was a philanthropic man, and would not on any account have ghost-lore eliminated from our Christmas luxuries. A nameless gentleman opined that, in the balance of nature, plants absorbed much of the malaria generated by decomposing animal bodies, and would like statistics to show whether gravediggers were particularly ephemeral persons. Mr. Wilson, a humorous speaker, after descanting on the expense of funerals and giving a back-hander to the clergy, proposed that the Dialectical Society should then and there, as a band of brothers, pass a resolution expressing their willingness to be burned. One Mr. Smith followed in the same practical way. Let a Society be formed, and build a cemetery with a large hall, in which latter the coffin should be placed, and some religious service take place—the hall to open on such a vault or oven as the opener had suggested. He diverged into a long but interesting discussion on the nature of the resurrection body, and had to be recalled to the question. There were great cries for a Spiritualist to reply; and I only wonder I escaped having to speak on the clerical side, but they spared me. One gentleman rose on the transcendental side, and said that the spirit of a deceased person disliked to witness the process of putrefaction going on in the abandoned

body; the spirit would be much happier if the body were dissipated, and so the magnetic link between the two broken.

Altogether there was too little collision of opinion to make this a thoroughly representative dialectical discussion. The subject was characteristic, and the views of the speakers typically bold and novel; but their consensus made the proceedings savour of a Mutual Admiration Society, which is seldom the case in this arena of discussion.

As we lighted our cigars in the lobby, the prevailing opinion seemed to be that Mr. Soares ought to offer himself then and there for instant incremation; and that subsequently a company should be formed, with limited liability, for cremating the other members as they successively dropped off.

Miss Miller herself entertained the audience of the Sunday Afternoon Lectures shortly afterwards with her views on the subject of Cremation. After an elaborate *resumé* of the modes of disposing of the dead in ancient times, she added—

"Cremation continued in use among the Romans until the fourth century of the Christian era, when it was abandoned, from an idea that the same corporeal body left by the departed soul was to be raised in its physical identity, from the dead to future life, an idea now no longer tenable by intelligent persons." If, extending the province of her researches, Miss Miller had investigated the funereal rites of the New World

by the light of archæological discovery, she would have found that in the extinct civilizations of Mexico, of Central America, and of the vast expanse from Panama isthmus to the southern Andes, where these bar the entrance to the aboriginal territories abutting on Patagonia, an immense array of facts proves incontestably the prevalence of Cremation at periods very long anterior, and reaching down to the latest time of its adoption in what is, by mistake, still called the Old World. Latterly the insanitary aspects of burial, and the disgusting obscenity with which the dead have been disturbed from their resting-places (?); the growing necessity not alone for the utilization of land, but also for the restoration to the soil of those elements of fructification which the bones contain, and which must, sooner or later, however we fight against the inevitable, return to the uses distinctly assigned them by nature: with truer conceptions of the duty of the living to the living as well as of the sentiments of respect, of reverence, of love for the memory of the dead, have led to a revival of the question, What is the most perfect method of disposing of our deceased friends? The preponderance of argument Miss Miller showed to be in favour of the simplest, safest, and surest method; and in the circumstances in which we are now placed, with a population needing every practicable care for its health and physique, Cremation had in these respects the advantage over every other means hitherto suggested, while it was most in har-

mony with true sentiment, and, on the whole, the most economic.

As an instance of the practical character of the British mind, I found, immediately after the delivery of the discourses quoted above, that Cremation was a *fait accompli*, and a Society formed for its promotion. The following announcement appeared in the daily papers :—

CREMATION SOCIETY.—Cremation having now been performed with perfect success, a Society has been constituted on the basis of the following declaration, which has been influentially signed :—

"We disapprove the present custom of burying the dead, and desire to substitute some mode which shall rapidly resolve the body into its component elements by a process which cannot offend the living and shall render the remains absolutely innocuous. Until some better method is devised, we desire to adopt that usually known as cremation."

All persons desirous of joining the Society or of promoting its objects are requested to send their names to the Secretary.

To make everything *comme il faut*, it only remains that Mr. G. de M. Soares and Miss Florence Fenwick Miller should immolate themselves *d la* Sardanapalus and Myrrha on the first pyre.

NOCTES SOCRATICÆ.

II.

The Dialectical Society on Marriage.

It is scarcely perhaps to be wondered at that, having determined to give a clear stage to all imaginable subjects, the Dialectical Society should show special favour to that of marriage, for this reason, that of all other topics of discussion, matrimony is that upon which men's mouths are most commonly sealed. Many a man who would not hesitate to overhaul the very bases of his religious belief, will think twice before he enters on a debate which might seem to entertain the possibility of polygamy or the eligibility of divorce. It is a domestic Heterodoxy before which the stoutest quail; but Dialecticians quail at nothing, not even at the Mrs. Caudle lecture which may not unreasonably be presumed to await Benedict Dialecticians at the close of their heretical discussions. Besides, these modern sophists are wise in their generation, wiser, the orthodox would say, than the "children of light." Downy liverymen of City Companies are in the habit of taking home with them, after a heavy dinner, a box of bonbons each, as a sop to the domestic Cer-

berus who is sitting up for them; but the Dialecticians do more than this—they let the ladies join in their debates, and—very softly indeed be it spoken—some of the raciest remarks I ever heard at the Dialectical Society have been made by ladies, all in the way of science and calm argument, of course. Let it not be for one moment supposed that I hint at the smallest levity or impropriety. I very rarely express my individual opinion, because I feel it my mission to describe and to report the opinions of others; but I thoroughly approve of the Dialectical method in this respect, and despise that mock modesty and squeamishness which prevent men and women from discussing together subjects which cannot be exhaustively dealt with by either sex separately, tabooing them on the score of an imaginary "impropriety."

The discussion of matrimonial topics seems to take an intermittent form, and to recur among our modern sophists in fixed and definite cycles. The first debate that made these philosophical Free Lances widely known to the outer world was that which ensued upon Viscount Amberley's tremendous paper on "Long Families." We, the uninitiated, were informed, whether rightly or wrongly I know not, that his lordship proposed that agricultural labourers should not be rewarded for bringing up a family of ten, but punished for having such a family. A lingering deference to the "proprieties" prevents one, inconsistently enough, perhaps, from going into the

minutiæ of this particular paper, or of one which succeeded on the subject of "Chastity." At this I was myself present, and it was then quite a new sensation for me to hear ladies discuss those hitherto proscribed subjects, and they were not elderly *bas bleus* either, but young ladies, married and unmarried. We shall have our Hypatias *redivivæ* yet!

Again at a succeeding debate, quite on the *toujours perdrix* principle—

Mr. Moncure D. Conway read a paper "On Marriage." Observing that the object of all serious reformers of the marriage-law should be to purge it of the least trace of the period when the wife was captured and held as a chattel, Mr. Conway said that our marriage-laws were as little adapted to the circumstances of modern society as the machinery of the age when they were constructed. Hence an appalling amount of crime was caused by the laws as at present existing. His idea of marriage was that of one man to one woman with the intention that it should be perpetual; and he certainly did not advocate that marriage should take place for a fixed time, as stated in Goethe's "Elective Affinities." In any moral or high sense, marriage could not be continued when the heart of it was dead. If a marriage were dead and corrupt, it should not last five minutes, much less five years. It was for the interests of society that those who had done wrong and wished to do right should be supported in the attempt; but to hold one

person bound to another, when he or she desired to escape, was simple slavery. Such coercion made the home a centre of evil influences, and such house could only demoralize every child brought up in it. It was a moral cesspool, sending out malaria and bad tempers into society. At present the only escape from ill-sorted unions was across the ruins of some person's character. Those who were too kind to ruin a partner's character remained without redress. There was also some reason to hope that the increased facility of divorce would check the rapid and excessive increase of population, each child being a difficulty added in cases of unhappy marriages. Although divorce was easy in Sparta, the Spartans were less licentious than other people, and it was often said that if divorce were easy, men would abuse it; but it was found that in Indiana, where there was the freest divorce, about double as many women as men, thirty-seven to nineteen, availed themselves of it; and Gibbon remarked that in Rome it was not the men but the women who wanted divorce. This was as might be expected, since a man when ill-mated, could have recourse to his business, politics, or club, and would only visit his home now and then, whilst the home was all-in-all to the wife, and consequently it was merely a prison if she had not a congenial partner. Countries with facile divorce laws were generally more prosperous than others. Witness the immorality and licentiousness of France caused by the Catholic marriage-law. Germany,

with the perfect freedom of divorce granted by Frederick the Great, was prosperous, and happy, and much better disciplined. The divorce laws of Prussia were almost identical with those of Indiana, U.S., and divorce was granted for desertion, cruelty, or for ineradicable repugnancy in Prussia. The result was that no country could show better moral statistics. He found that, in the long run, the chief objection to innovation in this matter would come from the sloths.

Dr. Charles R. Drysdale said, that the marriage-law of Europe, he believed, dated only from the reign of the Emperor Justinian, before which date Christianity had been found perfectly compatible with the Roman customs of facility of divorce called *usus*, and even with polygamy. John Milton, in his prose works in an article on the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, restored to the Good of both Sexes* (p. 15), after showing that unhappy partners would be better apart, explained that the indissolubility of marriage was caused by "the Canon Law, not consulting with Charity, the interpreter and guide of our faith, but resting in the mere element of the test." Percy B. Shelley, the most philosophical poet of the 19th century, was in favour of facility of divorce. Baron W. Von Humboldt maintained that the State "should entirely withdraw its active solicitude from the institution of marriage, and in its particular modifications rather leave it wholly to the free choice of the individuals, and the various contracts they may enter into

with respect to it." Mr. J. S. Mill, although admitting that there might be great *moral* delinquency in divorce in particular cases, thought that there should not be *much legal* difficulty in obtaining it. Taking these things into consideration, and regarding the number of unmarried women, the amount of unhappy marriages, and the prostitution of modern times, Dr. Drysdale thought that, in all probability, facility of divorce would do a great deal for society. It would also tend to check these large families, the curse of Britain and Germany, and thus to improve the condition of the poorer classes. Prostitution was often the result of unhappy marriage. He therefore begged to support Mr. Conway in his views on this question. If women had the franchise, he felt persuaded that the matter would be soon settled.

Then the ladies had their say:—

Miss Wallington said that, as far as marriage was concerned, it was impossible to obtain an equality between the sexes, because Nature had given man advantages in this matter.—Mrs. Smith (a visitor), agreed with many of the remarks that had been made in support of greater freedom of divorce, although she was not prepared to go to the extent that had been advocated.—Mrs. Johnston Robertson said that it was greatly to be regretted that women were not represented in the House of Commons, as it was not fair for men alone to make laws to govern both sexes. It

was clear that some alteration in the present law was necessary and that divorce should be freer, but she was not willing to go the length Mr. Conway advocated.—A lady did not quite understand why a previous speaker would give divorce for drunkenness, and yet not allow it in cases of bad temper.—Mrs. Sims said that, whatever alterations might be made in the law of divorce, marriage would never have the happy effect it should have until the tastes and culture of both men and women were altered and improved. The basis of marriage was too often only transient appearances, while it should, in her opinion, be invariably grounded on intelligence.

Mr. Richard Harte too, one of the Council of the Society, read a paper on this delicate subject, which he has since published in the form of a pamphlet, with an appendix greatly exceeding in length the original treatise. Taking as his definition of marriage "That union of the sexes which is most in accordance with the moral and physical necessities of human beings, and which harmonizes best with their other relations in life," he endeavours to show that the form of marriage which answers to his definition was in savage times polyandry, founded on the practice of infanticide in the case of female offspring; in barbarous times polygamy, founded on the practice of treating women as property; and that the form proper to civilized times is monogamy, founded on the independence of women. He points out that prostitution is

the inevitable concomitant of polygamy; and monogamy implies, not only that no man should have several wives, but also that every man should have a wife. Our present form of marriage does not, he argues, fulfil the conditions of monogamy; and the only means of attaining them is the equal division of maternity among all women, and the limitation of the family of each. As at first, capture and afterwards purchase was the *fundamentum relationis* of marriage, so the independence and protection assured to women by advancing civilization make *love* the only fact upon which marriage by free contract can be based. He thus summarizes his Appendix:—

"After all, the burden of my song here, as in other instances, amounts to this: *Discard from your morality the fictions of capture and purchase, and take the fact of love as your criterion of right and wrong in the sexual relations of mankind.* And if this extremely 'mild' advice be likely to disturb 'the sanctity of the domestic hearth,' all I can say is, that the domestic hearth must have become an affair even more wretchedly venal, tyrannical, and contemptible than there is at present reason to believe it."

But perhaps the most original phase of Heterodoxy on this subject is that attained by Mr. Herbert Noyes, B.A., who read before the Society the paper I subjoin at length, which I was half tempted to christen "Mr. Noyes on the Elective Affinities," "Free Love," "Spirit Wives," or something of that

kind. But, not to appear to forget the gravity of the subject, I allow the reader to retain his own title, which is—

Matrimonial Relations and Social Reforms.

The statistics recently collected by Dr. Batillon in his elaborate article on "Marriage" in his Physiological Dictionary, and embodied by Dr. Drysdale in a most valuable paper read to the Dialectical Society, go a long way to verify the conclusions which would naturally suggest themselves to all reflecting minds in favour of matrimony, and show that celibacy among the adult population is not only most detrimental to health and longevity, but is also chargeable with many other disastrous results.

The weak joint in the armour of the statist is that there are considerations other than physiological which tell in favour of married life, such as, that the married are mostly picked lives, and as being mostly better off than their celibate neighbours, have more comfortable homes and fewer hardships, and are better cared for in sickness and in health than the single; but after making all these allowances, there remains a mass of evidence to support a tremendous Bill of Indictment against celibacy. It has been no small misfortune for society that physiological discussions should have been so generally deemed the exclusive monopoly of the medical profession, and unfitted for non-professional ears.

But, assuming the conclusions to be deduced from Dr. Batillon's statistics to be in accordance with the facts of the case, it would seem impossible to exaggerate the importance of forcing them on public attention. There can be no doubt of the lamentable fact that the great majority of our population have not only never given a thought to the causes of the evils which are settling around them, but, as far as possible, ignore their existence. The thoughtless world would be rudely startled from its torpor of indifference if it were dinned into its ears that celibacy swelled the ranks of criminals, lunatics, and suicides, as well as the Bills of Mortality, in something like a double ratio as compared with marriage!

It would need but little reflection to convince those who are acquainted with the elements of physiology that this is only what might be expected. The connexion between a sound mind and a sound body is beginning to be understood now-a-days, and we know what is the result of an undue accumulation of bile and other secretions in the system due to any derangements of the natural ducts.

Naturam expellas furcâ tamen usque recurret.

The broad conclusion I draw from these premises is that the manners and customs of the 19th century in regard to matrimonial relations are sorely in need of legislative and social reform, and is the practical question I now propose for our consideration. I do

not propose to contest or dissect Dr. Batillon's very ample and interesting statistics—I am contented to admit the practical expediency of universal marriage on the broadest grounds, and prefer to address myself to the consideration of the notorious social evils at present existing, and their possible antidotes. Nor do I propose to waste time in historical recapitulations. I might indulge in a preliminary exposition of the principles of the Roman Marriage Laws, and point out that the ancient Spartan Legislation was founded on the principle that it was the duty of every citizen to raise a thriving progeny of legitimate children for the service of the State, and that it imposed penalties on those who married too late or not at all, far more severe than the mild penal taxes which, up to a recent period, were imposed on the contumacious bachelor of the British Isles. I might quote Plato, too, who expressly affirmed that every citizen should consult the interests of the State rather than his own pleasure in choosing a wife; for the wise men of old were not blind to many considerations which modern wisdom has overlooked; but it would be a waste of time to dwell on the records of the past, unless, indeed, they should suggest to some of our eloquent advocates of woman's rights that it would be desirable to exact pledges from some of the candidates now on their probation to revive the stringent legislation of Lycurgus.

But practical utility is our present purpose, and

our business is to hunt up and hound down existing evils, and devise remedies for them, rather than to discuss the sayings and doings of our forefathers. Where we entertain any doubt as to the wisest course to pursue, or need historical proof of the evil results to be anticipated from any untried suggestion, we may be forgiven a brief reference to historical precedents.

Now, I take it for granted that we are all agreed that marriage is the natural condition and celibacy the unnatural condition of adult humanity, and that whatever is contrary to nature must be radically wrong, unless we are so deluded as to deem the creation wiser than the Creator.

The existing evils which discredit our manners and customs in the matter of the relation of the sexes are sufficiently notorious, but there has been a singular absence of practical suggestions for their reformation. We hear much of the wrongs which are said to be sustained by women at the hands of men. We hear little or nothing of the wrongs—the far greater wrongs, as I think—which women sustain at each other's hands, or rather from each other's tongues. We hear little condemnation of feminine scandal-mongers, and of that most heartless and merciless ostracism which is meted out by women to their erring sisters, to whom they would fain close the gates of forgiveness for ever. The Pharisaical self-righteousness of the corrupt society which visits its own delinquencies on its weaker vessels, and which women are

the first and foremost to encourage, I hold to be the chief of the wrongs of women. We hear much of the wrongs of the whole army of spinsters and unprotected females, a woful and lamentable tale. We hear the woes of the bachelors and their liability to premature decay and early death. We hear much of the wrongs of the married, and the scandalous inconsistencies of the marriage laws of the three kingdoms, the denial of due facility for divorce, and the prevalence of various other social evils attesting the corruption of the age. These are all matters which imperatively demand consideration. But the remedies which popular opinion proposes are, after all, but palliatives, and do not touch the root of the evil. I entirely believe that divorce should be prompt and free *whenever* mutually desired; but if it be only desired by one of the pair, it is a question on what conditions and under what safeguards it should be conceded. The main obstacle to divorce consists of untenable ecclesiastical fallacies, which we shall have to consider presently. The secondary and more serious obstacle is the interest of the children of the marriage. I agree with those who hold that it is far more prejudicial to children to witness the divided counsels of their parents than to be finally parted from one or other of them; and I agree that it is far more prejudicial to society that a discordant pair should be compelled to live together than that they should be allowed to sever the artificial

bonds which alone unite them. The current complaints of the state of the laws affecting the property of married women I have very little sympathy with. Practically there is ample protection now for all who choose to avail themselves of it, and I conceive that the less the Legislature interferes with private family arrangements the better. What we really need is that well-assorted marriages should become universal, and that both sexes should be better educated; and that wives should be treated with more consideration among all classes of society, would be the natural consequence of a sounder system of education becoming general. I am not one of those who live in any dread of an inordinate increase of population.

The Malthusian theory, or rather the reputed Malthusian theory—for I have a shrewd suspicion that Malthus is by no means responsible for all the fallacies which pass current in his name—I look upon as a delusion altogether. We have no such dread of the danger of over-population as seems to haunt so many of our public speakers. We have always regarded it as a baseless bugbear. We believe there is room in the British Isles for ten times the present population. The markets of the world are open to us for food, arts, and manufactures, and the mineral resources of the country offer almost inexhaustible fields of labour wherein to earn its purchase-money, and chemistry and science are continually increasing the resources of

the soil. When an acre of market garden will annually produce crops of the value of some 300*l.*, and the average produce of a farm does not reach 10*l.* per acre, there is ample margin for the employment of more remunerative labour; and there are many of the most glorious regions of the earth ever ready to welcome our surplus hands, and not only provide brilliant prospects and happy homes for those who leave us, but to multiply trade openings for those who remain. But if the average standard of the race were raised, as it soon will be raised, by the civilization of our native savagery, and by the dissipation of the gross ignorance of physiological facts pervading all classes of society, which will soon follow the sounder education of the masses, we shall find, long before population has reached its limits, that the results which experience points to as incidental to high breeding among our flocks and herds will assert themselves among the human herds. The civilized human animal will not be so prolific as the uncivilized. The psychic force now consumed in the indulgence of the lower appetites will be more absorbed by the higher faculties; for we are now beginning to understand that it is one and the same psychic force which is expended in physical and mental exertions.

Were marriage, as it should be, universal, nature would herself provide a remedy for over-population, without any resort to those artificial expedients so universally adopted in France to counteract the

ruinous tendency to the minute subdivision of landed properties, which is the result of the mischievous operation of the Code Napoleon, and which tends to destroy the gentle blood it has taken centuries to refine—the blood which goes to the formation of that delicate and refined brain and fine organization, so essential for the manifestation of the higher intellectual powers. The popular saying, that it takes three generations to make a gentleman, is powerfully vindicated by the modern discovery of the fact, which I have the anthority of a pupil of Liebig for asserting, that chemical analysis reveals a marked distinction between the blood of a gentleman and the blood of a boor. Artificial expedients to check the population of our planet may or may not be open to objection, but at any rate they are less so than the evils which are incidental to the licentiousness of nominal celibacy, which swell our criminal rolls, and send so large a proportion of our infants to increase the population of the spheres.

It seems to me that there is no need of statistics to prove the evil results of real or nominal celibacy. Analogy alone would suffice to establish the fact. Darwin would tell you that all nature teems with evidence of it. Health depends on the adequate exercise of the natural functions of every portion of the human machine, the physical frame ; for it depends upon the harmonious co-operation of the whole nervous system ; and we know that this is so mar-

vellously and harmoniously contrived, and so interdependent, that no portion of it can be thrown out of gear, or be allowed to fall into disuse, without detriment to the machine itself.

We know that our physical and intellectual powers suffer equally from any intermission of due exercise—the *mens* is always *sana, corpore sano;* and if Dr. Drysdale had been pleased to go more deeply into delicate details, he might have told you that derangements of the reproductive organs so intimately affect the brain, which is the special organ of the mind, that the sad statistics of our lunatic asylums, and the melancholy experience of their physicians, afford the most terrible evidence of the widespread evils occasioned by the prevalence of celibacy, and its incidental irregularities among the adult population. But even were such statistics carefully collected and generally accessible, they would not exhibit a tithe of the evils resulting to society from causes which are known to affect the progeny as fatally as the parent. The fearful social evil, prostitution, cries aloud for a remedy, and threatens our children's children with an inheritance of woe. No palliative that has yet been suggested is equal to the necessities of the case. Monogamy seems to be the intent of Nature, else she would not so nearly equalize the male and female birth-rates. But polygamy, whether legalized or clandestine, does seem to have prevailed from the earliest times all over the world; and it is certainly a question

whether it would not be better to legalize and regulate it after the fashion of the Mahommedans, than to encourage its clandestine adoption under the most lawless conditions, by faithless and Pharisaical monogamists. Lady Duff Gordon, in her letters from Egypt, allowed us to see a shrewd old Mahommedan's estimate of the comparative merits of the two systems; and had the honesty to acknowledge the justice of his conclusions, so unfavourable to the morals of the Christian—of which, indeed, we have little reason to be proud. If no more radical remedy could be suggested for existing evils than has yet been proposed, we would vote for legalized polygamy. But time and patience and reflection may bring us better things. Humanity is, indeed, interested in forcing on public attention subjects which so essentially affect the interests of future generations, and in putting an end to the pernicious prudery which would withdraw such vital questions from the wholesome atmosphere of free discussion.

If a healthy state of society is to be brought about, marriage must be universal; but it must be also well-assorted. The marriage state seems to be indispensable to the proper development of mind and body. I verily believe that the exaltation of celibacy by ecclesiastical authorities is one of the most fatal fallacies that ever cursed the world, and of all the mischievous inventions blasphemously ascribed to the Almighty, and published as His Word, I doubt if

there be one more mischievous and mistaken than the text which asserts that *there is no marriage in Heaven.* If there be a spiritual body corresponding in all respects to our mortal body, then there must be spiritual functions to be performed by it analogous to the functions assigned to its earthly counterpart. The mortal body is a compound magnetic machine. I believe that the spiritual body will prove to be the same, and the combination of the positive and negative —the masculine and the feminine—under more subtle conditions, will prove to be as much a spiritual as a terrestrial law. If there be, as we know there is, a future state, in which we are destined to retain our individuality, there must be marriage in Heaven, there must be a re-union of loving souls. If love be divine, if it be the highest attribute of human nature, to suppose that the intense affection which unites those who are happily mated in this world, and which so frequently survives the severance of ecclesiastical ties by death, is destined to be unsatisfied in a future life, is to do violence to the deepest instincts of our spiritual nature—it is to degrade the marriage state on earth, to exalt sensual considerations, and to impugn the purity of affection. If the pure in heart are to be blessed in Heaven, above all others, we need a sounder definition of purity than has yet occurred to the ecclesiastical mind. That celibacy and purity are synonymous terms I utterly disbelieve. I am inclined to think that the purity which is to be

supremely blessed consists in a faithful observance of the laws which Nature would prescribe, were her occult laws fully understood.

But on the other hand it will be answered, "that our experience of marriage life, and the domestic interiors of our friends and neighbours, taken in connexion with the public scandals of the Divorce Courts, does not justify us in regarding marriage as a panacea for the social and moral evils incidental to the celibate life of so large a portion of our population, and that licentiousness is practically not confined to the unmarried." Alas, it is unquestionable that extensive and radical reforms are needed before marriage can be brought up to its Utopian standard of perfection. The truth is, that we need a new definition of marriage—for there is a true, genuine marriage, and a false, spurious marriage.

There is no doubt that the Churches, in spite of all their corruptions, have embalmed in their ceremonial mummeries many forgotten verities, many vital truths. They have, in innumerable instances, lost the key to the mysteries enshrined in their traditions, but we are not left without a clue to the hidden treasures. The spirit that had fled from the dry bones still lives in realms where it is accessible to the philosopher, if invisible to the theologian. I maintain that the Churches are *entirely in the right* in affirming true marriage to be indissoluble; *entirely in the wrong* in asserting that their own rites are sufficient to con-

stitute a true marriage. It is my firm conviction that affection and affinity are indispensable to an indissoluble marriage, and that animal passions temporarily excited are not reliable indications of these indispensable elements of the true matrimonial relations.

I am disposed to think that in a true marriage man and wife are not so much one flesh as *virtually* one spirit and one soul—one in time and one for eternity; and I believe that when we begin to elevate the art of mesmerism into the status of a science—*the science of soul*—we shall begin to understand mysteries of which but the faintest glimmer is now dawning on our intelligence.

I have met with a case of a happily married pair, between whom there existed such an intimate bond of union that, in the absence of the husband from home, the wife, though utterly ignorant of his whereabouts, could always go straight to him, if she wanted him, and find him wherever he might be. There existed between the pair that strong magnetic affinity which exists between a powerful mesmerist and the sensitive subject *en rapport* with him, with this difference, that the power of attraction existed irrespective of the active exercise of the positive will. It is this attraction between the positive and negative poles which, I believe, will eventually come to be recognised as the *sine quâ non* of true marriage. The human machine I take to be a powerful compound magnet, with its negative and positive poles—the right side of

all dual organs being positive, and the left negative; and I take it that the machine is not perfect without the combination of the masculine and feminine—the true positive and negative elements. When we speak of "*personal influence*" language bears testimony to a grand mystery of nature. My own belief is that we are so many natural Leyden jars, unequally charged with electricity or magnetism, which is always seeking to find its own level, so that we are always either giving or taking it from those with whom we come in contact and those with whom we live. If the influence so given or taken does not harmonize, the results of continued intercourse cannot be beneficial. Practically we all act unconsciously upon this principle, though so few of us recognise the philosophy of it. Oil and water, acid and alkali, will never harmonize with each other, however long they may be bottled up together. We need to study the philosophy of the affections between the sexes far more deeply than it has been studied heretofore, before we shall discover the clue which will guide us out of the labyrinth of difficulties and dilemmas in which we seem so inextricably involved.

The first problem which we have to solve is, how to discover these affinities, and promote the growth of deep heart-rooted affections, in time to form true matrimonial relations, before they are anticipated by spurious matrimonial relations, the result of mere animal passions, and so bring about a moral Utopia, without sapping the foundations of society, and doing

violence to the established standards of morality, or violating the sanctity of family ties.

And the second is, how we can best raise up a barrier against those spurious matrimonial relations, whether sanctioned or unsanctioned by the Church, and all the crying social and moral evils which have rendered modern society rotten to the core.

To suppose for one moment that we can remedy the deep-rooted wrongs, which we all acknowledge, by raving about the rights of women, or vaunting the undoubted advantages of free divorce and marriage law reform, seems to me to be a fatal fallacy. To suppose that in a healthy state of society women would ever enter into equal competition with men I hold to be a radical error. In our unhealthy state of society it may be desirable to try the experiment, as a palliative of evils which cannot be rooted up except by long patience, forbearance, and perseverance; but that the experiment must ultimately fail I entertain no doubt whatever.

I frequently enter a protest against the modern claptrap cry of "woman's rights," because I do not believe in any wrongs being systematically inflicted by society on the weaker sex from any antiquated notion of woman's inferiority to man. There is a modicum of truth in the old adage, "Vox populi vox Dei;" and I look upon woman's position in the civilized world as the one which the common sense of the world has assigned her, in harmony with the provisions of Nature.

I maintain that it is the spirit of Trades Unionism, which restricts the number of apprentices in trades, and interposes all possible restrictions on the admission of new members to old corporations, and not legislative enactments, which stands in the way of masculine spinsters and unprotected females, who desire to follow in the wake of their male relatives, and compete with them in the open fields of labour.

The success achieved by Mrs. Garrett-Anderson, and many of her sister practitioners of medicine, is a sufficient proof that public opinion does not share the prejudices or the selfish exclusiveness of the medical profession; but we must not forget that the faculty is equally opposed to homœopaths, hydropaths, mesmerists, psychopaths, and every description of heterodox masculine practitioners. The Hon. Society of Lincoln's Inn declines to admit feminine members, and the Corporation of Attorneys and Solicitors are equally obdurate; but these same Corporations impose all sorts of restrictions on masculine candidates, and would gladly be more exclusive if they could. But it is open to any woman to plead her own cause in person; and we must not forget that the supreme Court of Appeal, not many years ago, patiently listened to a woman pleading her parent's cause, with most interminable prolixity, for I forget how many days.

Women are not admitted to orders in the Church, and Orthodox Christians appeal to what they please to call the Word of God to justify her exclusion; but

the public flock, Sunday after Sunday, to hear the inspired orations of Mrs. Tappan, the American medium, and congratulate themselves on their good fortune in having found out an orator whose chaste eloquence far surpasses anything that is to be heard from any preacher in lawn sleeves in any Orthodox pulpit of the land.

Public opinion is sound in the matter of woman's rights. The spirit of Trades Unionism, pervading private associations and antiquated corporations and class interests may, no doubt, be liberalized with advantage, but that is not to be done by parading popular fallacies.

The marriage laws of the United Kingdom are rotten and inconsistent with themselves, but their rottenness and inconsistency is not due to any disregard of woman's rights. Their rottenness is principally due to ecclesiastical fallacies, founded, as I have already argued, on the erroneous application of a sound principle. Their inconsistency is due to local and sectarian prejudices, which ought never to have been so freely recognised by the Legislature. But ecclesiastical fallacies have already received a death-blow in the now almost general recognition of civil marriages.

The adventitious sanctity of marriage derived from ecclesiastical ceremonies is doomed to be ignored by coming generations. The true sanctity of marriage relations, based on the divine laws of human nature,

must come to be recognised in its place, when the future race are fully initiated in the mysteries of Will.

Then there will be no question of divorce, no question of woman's independence of her husband. She will be no more independent of him, and he will be no more independent of her, than the two poles of the magnet are independent of each other. Then the harmony of the parents will be transmitted to the children, and there will arise a new generation of men, who will carry the banners of human progress to a higher pinnacle than they have ever reached since the world began. Then will come a time when the principles of breeding—which are now exclusively applied to the improvement of races of cattle—will be applied to the improvement of the human race; and the extraordinary success which has already been achieved by careful selection among animals will be surpassed, beyond the most sanguine anticipations, in a moral, physical, and intellectual development of man. When we speak of the deplorable condition of our marriage relations, we must not forget that the most pernicious result of the existing evils is to be seen in the deterioration of the race. We are beginning to wake up to the importance of national education. We have not yet in this country opened our eyes to the fact that our education begins on our parents' marriage day. Our more enlightened and less prejudiced Transatlantic cousins have become awake to this impor-

tant fact, and here again Will force is the key to the hidden mystery. When we have studied its arcana, we shall begin to comprehend how the mental impressions on the mother's mind are stereotyped on the fruit of her womb, and how important the happiness of the mother and the harmony of her home are to the moral development of the higher nature of her unborn child. How exceedingly blind we have been not to recognise the extreme importance of these considerations heretofore! The Faculty must be familiar with innumerable instances in their practice in which accidents and alarms experienced by mothers during gestation have produced deplorable and self-evident results upon their offspring. Is it not strange that it should not have occurred to them to utilize this knowledge, and make public the principles which are the legitimate deductions from the known facts? Is it not incredible they should not have perceived that good results were as easy to be attained by proper precautions as evil results by casualties? That the psychological impressions of the mother do produce a very powerful effect on the mental and physical condition of her unborn child, and that the most incredibly beneficial results may be anticipated when the School Boards of the kingdom condescend to concern themselves with the dissemination of useful knowledge, I entirely believe. But public prudery has intervened, and the world is to be left in ignorance of the physiological facts which most intimately concern

it to know; and here we find ourselves face to face with the root of the evils which are the curse of humanity. We hear the Origin of Evil much debated in these days. I am induced to think ignorance is at the root of all evil; if it be not, it is very near the root—it is a canker which is calculated to eat into the heart of the healthiest tree. Its fruit is vice and dissipation and licentiousness and crime. Physiological facts should enter as a necessary element into the education of the youth of the land. If the proper study of mankind be man, what supreme folly that the child should not be taught to begin the study of human nature in his earliest years! "Experientia docet," it is said; but does the wise parent leave his child to ruin its digestion by gluttony in order to teach it moderation in its appetites?—does he leave it to discover that nightshade is poisonous by tasting its tempting berries?

Why, then, should he be so reckless as to launch his child among the breakers of adult life, without any warning of the hidden reefs and sunken shoals on which his barque of health and happiness is in danger of foundering?

It is an inexcusable folly, sanctioned by the sanctimonious prudery of the age, which has borne the fatal fruits of corruption now ripening around us. If we would uproot the Upas tree and plant the Tree of Life in our weed-choked soil—

1. We must set to work to harrow out this per-

nicious ignorance, and prepare the soil by the universal teaching of physiological facts and the philosophy of life in our National Schools and seminaries, and to the youth of both sexes, in public and private circles.

2. We must adopt the rational and natural system of mixed education, which has been found so successful by our Transatlantic cousins—the system of bringing up boys and girls together at the same schools. They are brought up together in the nursery, they are destined to live together in the world—why then should they be kept apart at the most critical period of their lives, when the heart is fresh and pure, and open to the deepest impressions and holiest influences?

3. We must do away with "the chaperon" system of espionage, devised to prevent young men and young women from reading each other's hearts, and replace it by the sounder safeguard of that knowledge which is power, by timely instruction in those principles which should guide them in their choice of partners for life, which are at present so universally ignored. There will be little danger of rash and thoughtless entanglements then. There is safety in numbers. There will be no such concentration of psychic influence in a single channel as too often upsets the balance of the mind, and withdraws the hand from the helm, and sets the barque adrift on the stormy seas of passion, under the present system, whose absurd restrictions have given birth to *Matrimonial*

Gazettes and surreptitious advertisements. Then our children will have opportunities of forming at leisure life-long attachments in early life; not grounded on the dictates of senseless lust, but founded on such intimate knowledge of each other's character as will enable them to form a sound judgment of their mutual affinities and sympathies.

Let the advocates of women's rights abandon their ill-judged agitation to promote woman's independence and set her up as a rival of man. Nature has assigned to either sex its own proper sphere, in which they can never be rivals, and she has blended them together by the potent influence and magnetic attraction of mutual sympathies. Those who have the interests of humanity at heart should strive to draw the bonds closer together, and not to rift them asunder. Let the advocates of education cease to clamour for girls' schools and girls' colleges, and set themselves to open the gates of Eton and Harrow and the portals of Oxford and Cambridge to women, and contend that the masculine gender shall be taken to include the feminine in the laws and constitutions of our universities and public schools, as well as in our electoral laws. Let us hear no more of woman's independence; but never forget that an unmated man or woman is an incomplete being. Let us proclaim that there is a grand truth hidden in the current phrase "man's better half," which needs to be dug out and exhibited in all its lustre to the world's wondering gaze.

Who that has ever felt the powerful magnetic attraction which draws two loving natures together in the heyday of youth and beauty and purity, and which is so potent as to make the briefest absence painful, but must acknowledge that if the possibilities of the marriage relations of the future were only rated by the lover's standard of sympathy and harmony, there would be reason to anticipate a vast improvement on the present matrimonial conditions of society?

When the laws of sympathy and antipathy come to be better understood, and sound principles deduced from them, it will be found that true marriage is intended to survive the honeymoon—that the real union of hearts is, as the poet, who is the true prophet, phrases it, a union of souls, not temporal but eternal.

In those happy days, marriage contracted in honest affection will no longer be influenced by unworthy and mercenary motives. The market price of woman will not be weighed out in gold. Then there will no longer be conflicting interests in households, nor dissensions in families, but the harmony which blesses the parents will be the inheritance of the children. Then we may look forward to the realization of that Utopian millennium which now seems a chimera, beyond the reach of our wildest dreams.

A lively debate ensued, of which the impressions remaining on my mind are, that the ladies who took

part in it held very broad and liberal views, even on such advanced subjects as polygamy; while one "psychopathic" gentleman told us he was seven years wandering up and down the world before he could find his proper magnetic complement. It was, as far as I recollect, something to do with the size of the lady's head that complicated the problem; but I have only a vague remembrance of his precise difficulty.

I fancy the above represents about the most progressive point reached at the date of "these presents;" but very likely before these sheets see the light a more tremendous heresy still may startle us out of our matrimonial serenity, and add one more to the already long list of Heterodoxies inscribed on the archives of this Socratical Society.

THE SUNDAY LEAGUE AT HOME.

If a person will not be so orthodox as to go to church on a Sunday evening, and fulfil the promises made by his godfather and godmother that he should "hear sermons," perhaps the most mildly heterodox thing he can do is to accept the invitation of the National Sunday League, and go to hear an "improving" lecture and a little "serious" music. During the winter of 1873-74 the non-churchgoers of the metropolis had a double invitation held out to them in this way by the League. One course of lectures went on at Freemasons' Hall, and another at South Place Chapel, Finsbury. The former, I fancy, did not quite answer the expectations of those who established them; and altogether the League were a good deal "drove about" by the Lord Chamberlain and the Sabbatarians; but they are a sturdy race, who die hard, and consequently take a deal of killing. The former series came to an end some few weeks before the other; the latter only on a certain Sunday evening, when I went to hear Madame Ronniger lecture on "Certain Moral and Æsthetic Deficiencies in the Education of the Present Day," to be followed by a selection from Haydn's "Creation." These were each such very improving subjects that I

cannot say I felt very reckless when I emerged on the flagstones of Moorgate Street, and made my way to South Place Chapel amid the clanging of the church bells. We were requested to be in our places by a quarter to seven, and I could see good reason for the arrangement in the already crowded condition of the building when I got there, almost within a minute of the specified time, for I always reckoned punctuality among the cardinal virtues. The charges for admission were 3*d.* to the galleries, 6*d.* to the side aisles, and 1*s.* to the body of the chapel. The two former divisions were pretty well filled, and the latter very fairly so, a quarter of an hour before proceedings were to commence. I took an orthodox friend with me, who was greatly exercised in his mind at the idea of keeping our hats on in a chapel. I tried to convince him that it was a sign of our heterodox liberty; but he never got quite reconciled to the notion, and furtively removed his beaver on the first convenient opportunity. Many of the audience kept it on during the whole evening; though I thought even a pure Theist might have unbonneted in deference to a lady.

At seven there entered below the platform, where a minute orchestra had been fitted up, a small band consisting of three violins, viola, violoncello, contrabass and flute, while a performer took his place at the grand pianoforte above. These gentlemen played Auber's overture to "La Sirène" very nicely indeed; and I

perceived at once that, if not large in quantity, the instrumental portion of the performance would be first-rate.

There is an unsabbatarian waltzy kind of style about "La Sirène" which I feared might prove as great a trial to my friend as the obnoxious hat. But he bore it manfully; and at the close of the overture, Madame Ronniger, an exceedingly fine and handsome lady, mounted the rostrum, and in a clear, unaffected voice, read her lecture from manuscript.

I was sorry for the lecturer's sake (or is there such a word as lecturess?) that every third person in South Place Chapel that evening seemed to be troubled with an incessant cough; and there was a lively, Sabbath-breaking baby up aloft somewhere, who seemed to have an opinion that he had better be at home in his bassinette, and expressed his opinion so audibly according to his ability, that I fancy most of the audience were of the same opinion too. I know I was.

The title of Madame Ronniger's lecture was—

"On certain Moral and Æsthetic Deficiencies in the Education of the Present Day."

We hear, she said, a great deal about Education now-a-days—a great deal about physical, and a *very* great deal about intellectual; but there is one sort of education concerning which, in my opinion, we hear too little—I mean the education of the *heart*. And when I speak of this I mean the training of the finer perceptions, which to Germans is known under the

title of Æsthetics. The true principle of æsthetic culture is to seek the beautiful not only in art and nature, but likewise in morals and manners. The man who is thoroughly imbued with this spirit will avoid a mean or unjust action, not only because it is in itself immoral, but also because its innate ugliness and repulsiveness are in opposition to his most cultivated instincts—at war, in fact, with all his convictions of moral beauty. I believe that every instance of oppression, of trespass upon the rights of others, every cause of barbarous war, and of tyranny of every sort, has proceeded as much from failure in the application or appreciation of æsthetic principles as from actual moral turpitude. For such reasons is it incumbent upon us to fence well the minds of the youth of both sexes with reverence for the beautiful as well as the good; with a love for beauty of the soul as well as of the eye.

We should begin betimes to cultivate this refinement of feeling. We cannot expect it to be developed by contact with the circumstances of life, for they tend rather to harden than to soften the natural disposition. The great German writer Goethe said, "Character is formed in the stream of the world," and this, in various respects is true. But the principles upon which character is founded, are instilled in earliest infancy—as the clay of the potter's vessel must be carefully moulded in the form we wish it to retain before it is exposed to hardening fires. And the bias and basis of the human model exist or are

prepared long before those after trials supervene, which often deface and pervert nature, as the potter's vessel is frequently cracked and broken in the burning. Therefore it is that the education of the young has always been, and is increasingly looked upon, as so important. In the mind of youth is laid the germ of future contaminating moral pestilence, or of healthy physical as well as spiritual growth. I regard the essentially human attribute of character as of primary significance. And fortunately character is not simply a quality of the mind, it is the concrete result of various natural qualities, numerous influences, diverse yet definite training. It is character that makes the man. External circumstances have, unquestionably, incalculable power in shaping out the course of life; but it is the psychological motive-power of feelings, passions, and aspirations from within outwards which exercises the chief influence of all. We ought, therefore, as before remarked, to begin early with the formation of character in children. To this feature of our human economy I would give even greater importance than that of intellectual acquirement. It forms not only the foundation of individual action and development, but the solidity and worth of the social edifice generally are based upon it. It has often struck me that far too little prominence is given to the development of character in our education of youth. Our young people are taught to be ambitious, to strive and struggle with their fellows, and, too frequently, not

with the noble desire to excel, but chiefly with the wish of achieving worldly and social success. From the neglect of purer and more elevated principles, result the cold unsympathetic disposition, rude and insolent manners, petty selfishness in the small things of daily life. And how frequently people, even excellent and respected in themselves, fail grievously in those lesser but not less attractive graces of character and demeanour, which St. Paul's "most excellent gift of charity" may be said to include. I dwell particularly upon this portion of my subject, because I desire to impress upon those of my sex here present my conviction that it is part of their mission, in the present day, to spread in a more extended degree than has ever yet been achieved through human life and society that humanizing and gentler spirit which should be one of the brightest ornaments of our public as well as of our home life, which the Apostle of old so grandly and so simply set forth, and which the greatest of all poets, Shakspeare, in his celebrated lines upon "the quality of mercy" embodied in immortal verse. We need more light and sweetness in life and manners, more thought for others, more grace, more idealism. I do not consider that we English in the lesser ways of life display much inclination or natural adaptation for the ideal; theoretically we unquestionably do so; and on a large scale the English people have on some occasions shown an appreciation of the more æsthetic and ideal needs of humanity which, as evidence of high and

generous feelings, will ever shine gem-like in the crown of national virtue. As instances may be cited, the Emancipation of Slaves, the Reform Bill, which, though belonging to the hard region of political economy, was a decided evidence of national æsthetic progress, as it was based upon consideration for, and appreciation of, the rights and nobler aspirations of others. We have not been wanting in some few great instances, such as these; but in the common life there is a vast difference between our profession and our practice.

We need the art of *life* as well as that which in the studio grows under the painter's life-realizing pencil, the sculptor's chisel, or the expressive touch of the musician. I do not wish to depreciate the naturally great qualities of my own nation. We have had and have among us great writers, great politicians, great generals, great talents—we have, in fact, greatness where the broad *general* character of a man comes into play; but in ordinary life we are apt to be hard and ungracious, and we seem to get harder and more calculating every day. We pride ourselves greatly upon being a practical people, and this is all very well as far as it goes.

In building our house we must have the carpenter before we have the decorator, and the mason before the carpenter; but we should by no means stop here. The lovely covering of moss, fern, trees, and fragrant flowers with which our earth is adorned may serve as

an excellent prototype, telling us that it is Nature's graceful and genial habit to clothe harshness with softness, distortion and convulsion with beauty in its countless manifestations of form and colour. No doubt much of the want of finish in human transactions may be attributed to the excitement of our short lives—the pace which kills. It is this headlong pace which doubtless frequently prevents equal and steady culture.

I have perfect confidence in the possibility of development—in the growing power of the human mind; but the incessant rush of circumstance, though often a stimulus, frequently acts with a crushing and deadening effect, which should be resisted or avoided.

Respecting the natural capability of development in individuals, I will quote a few sentences from a recent American writer, who complains that a great part of the lighter literature of the day has a tendency to ignore or slight this capacity for growth in our internal being.

"Much of the fiction of our day," says this author, "otherwise strong and admirable, is discouraging in this respect. In the delineation of character, some are good, some are bad, and some indifferent. We have a lovely heroine or a noble hero developing, seemingly in harmony with the inevitable laws of their natures. Associated with them are those of the common or baser sort, also developing in accordance with the innate principles of *their* natures. The first are presented as if created

of different and finer clay than the other. The first are the flowers in the garden of Society, the latter the weeds.

"According to this theory of character, the heroine must grow as a moss-rose, and the weed remain a weed. Credit is not due to one; blame should not be visited on the other. Is this true? Is not the *choice* between *good* and *evil* placed before every human soul, save where ignorance and mental feebleness destroy free agency? We protest against this narrowing down of life, though it be done with the faultless skill and taste of the most cultivated genius."

In the education of the *young* I would endeavour to point out the abstract, and even the artistic *beauty* of good morals, great actions, lofty aspirations, and noble deeds, as well as the *moral* and *religious* obligations of mankind in such respects. I would indeed make a culture of loveliness of every kind—moral as well as artistic.

And thus might much of the unnecessary and repelling austerity which virtue sometimes chooses to assume, and the needless gloom of the religious ascetic be dispersed and banished. The talented author of "Higher Law" suggestively remarks, "I know no more powerful agent in producing the higher morality than the love of beauty." I never could understand why this exquisite world should not be a place of constant delight, provided we all gave to the happiness of others that generous and sympathetic attention which we are in the habit of giving to our

own. It is *selfishness*, either wilful or unconscious, which is the great bar to happiness. I believe so firmly in a possible Utopia of general well-being, that, with the exception of the natural loss of loved friends, I do not otherwise see why, with good education and good management, either misery or crime *need* exist. It may be a long time before we arrive at this point, but I seriously believe in its possibility; and this possibility of the realization of higher ideals is to me almost the most cheering aspect we can acquire of existence. We need not be *angels* to gain this eminence, only conscientious, well-educated, and true-hearted men and women. Education is perhaps the greatest lever which we possess for the accomplishment of this most desirable perfection; but in the enthusiasm and earnestness now obtaining upon this subject, let us not stop short at the training of the intellectual faculties; let our best efforts be directed to the training and education of the heart—to the awakening and strengthening of all that is noblest and truest in the human soul. This theory, however, necessarily imposes upon all who adopt it and would follow it the special obligation of personal excellence, and the broad unselfish love of our fellow-creatures.

One of the subjects and special interests of modern growth which I think greatly neglected in education, but which certainly ought to form one of its special features, is the absolute duty of kindness to animals.

Gentleness and consideration to dumb creatures may be taught, if they are not innate in the character; and but too conclusive proofs that there is ample room for their culture may be found in the wretched lives and conditions of the hardly-used beasts of burden in our streets—in the sufferings of the over-driven cart and cab horse, the patient uncomplaining ass; and even among the animals which man keeps for his pleasure and amusement—the pigeon with its broken wing and closed eye fluttering its short life out beneath the smiles of beauty, and the joyous gaiety of brave men; the panting hare gasping in its death chase to the triumphant yelling of hound and the jubilant shouts of the merry huntsman. I need not dwell upon the barbarous and shameless cruelties, too agonizing for repetition, which from the police courts and the chamber of horrors of the vivisector cry for vengeance, and the championship of all just and tender souls.

In the treatment of animals different nationalities come out very curiously. The Frenchman, otherwise not used to shrink from what wounds the nerves and susceptibilities, is singularly kind to his household companions, and poor puss who, among certain nations claiming high intellectual gifts, is kicked and cuffed as the pariah of society, by our Gallic neighbours is treated with a tenderness worthy of a chivalrous people, too generous to oppress what is in their power, or to ill-use the humble friend who faithfully

and lovingly serves them and theirs. The Italian is decidedly cruel to the brute creation, and the agonizing sights in the markets of that country are beyond description; but they are not incomprehensible when we learn, as Miss Frances Power Cobbe tells us, that the great spiritual chief of that gifted people declares that "Man owes no duty to the brutes." Now, I believe that all these sins against the rights of the weak might, if not altogether, at least in a very considerable degree, be prevented by æsthetic training. How many persons are compelled to act humanely from fear of censure, pride of intellect, and instilled precept, who would fail to do so from the genuine promptings of the heart. Let us therefore either by means of the naturally good heart or its substitute, æsthetic training, sedulously impress upon the growing disposition and character of youth that respect for the rights of all creatures which is a true index of the really noble soul. If we stigmatize the juvenile torturer merely as wicked and depraved, he will, in all probability, only repeat his monstrous conduct; but if it be represented to him that to practise senseless and wanton cruelty is beneath the dignity of a rational being, both reason and pride are called into exercise, and act as a mechanical heart and conscience; and where we cannot have the reality, its imitation, for the sake of the victims, is surely better than callous and savage indifference to suffering. Miss Cobbe has well said that the "growth in our

time of the sentiments of sympathy and compassion for weakness and suffering, as compared to former centuries, is a loftier and diviner progress than any achievements of mechanical skill or scientific discovery." I agree with Mrs. William Grey, the distinguished educationist, in believing that anything which depends upon the powers, good will, and grasp of the human mind, is eminently possible. It is by the awakening of these mental agents that we may secure progress and justice. In the events and thoughts which agitate mankind to-day, in the history of past times, those great symbols of enlightened humanity, progress, and justice, are linked together as supreme powers. To them we owe priceless benefits, material and moral. Before them the torturers of the dark Middle Ages, the Inquisition, the rack, and the stake have quailed; before their banner the harsh and oppressive laws of tyrants have become as mere writing in the sands; and the chains binding the sacred limbs of freedom have fallen powerless. Because those terrible times are past we must not forget that they have been. Let us never be so ungrateful to the memory of the martyrs who have given their blood in the cause of liberty, as to forget why and how they suffered in their noble duty to future generations. Heaven grant that never again in our favoured and happy land may the dark mantle of superstition, in whatever form, fall over the energy and independence of thought of her sons! Heaven grant that its dark

folds may never enshroud or obscure the purity of English homes, and the simple but priceless freedom and cheering warmth of our English hearts! But neither progress nor justice are antagonistic to the true spirit of Christianity. Christianity is indeed an exponent of the highest moral æsthetics. Perhaps in these days of broad intellectual daylight we are apt to forget the great benefits which the modern world owes to the pure and humane spirit of Christianity. What more comprehensive scheme for the general well-being and happiness could be imagined than that code which teaches us to think of the claims of others as our own? Were this principle, so simple yet so all embracing, really carried out consistently, the vices and miseries which deform or sadden human existence would have no place in this exquisite world of ours, which Heaven or Nature, as we each may understand it, has made so rich in its capabilities and resources, so wonderful in its beauty, and which man by his evil passions so often defaces and desecrates. Could this broad faith be understood and practised in its pure simplicity, perplexing creeds and arbitrary dogmas might safely be relegated to the dark cell of the mystic, or the dusty shelves of the doctrinal sophist or bigoted polemic. I confess that I set little value upon the subdivisions of scholastic creeds, and I attach small importance to the peculiar professions of any. Their benefits seem to me negative in comparison with the positive hurtfulness of the dissensions they

have caused. It appears to me that they have been more productive of strife and wickedness than peace and goodness. The spirit of true religion I believe to consist in doing as we would be done by, and in keeping a soul untarnished by deceit, falseness, and selfishness. If we make these principles our own, and act upon them systematically, it will signify little whether our creed be of Paul or of Apollos. Perhaps the finest practical manifestation of religion is the unswerving devotion to duty. A few days ago an old soldier was lamenting to me the want of a more thorough appreciation of this principle in the education and action of the day. He may be right or wrong in his belief, that too little importance is attached to the observance of duty, but there is no doubt that the principle is one which cannot be too strongly enforced. A nobler legacy was never left to a nation than those undying words of Nelson—"England expects every man to do his duty!"

One of the most refreshing and encouraging facts in connexion with my subject is, that we may almost all do something to aid in the progressive education of those around us. And it is especially delightful to remember that this noble pursuit of education is one which we may follow to the last day of our lives. So limitless is the sea of knowledge that one human intellect can take in but a very small portion of the vast banquet spread before it. It is a wiser plan to keep the mind ever in the attitude of learning, for

thus may be preserved much of its freshness and its capacity for elevated enjoyment, its singleness of aim, and its reverence for true greatness. In learning, self may be most easily forgotten—merged in a fresh and ever-progressive new existence. I think all persons should have some study on hand as a resource from the wearisomeness of every-day cares, as a discipline as well as a means of systematically acquiring knowledge. To our wealthy millionaires I would commend the example of Sir Peter Coates, a distinguished inhabitant of Paisley, a town from which I have just returned, and where the large employer of labour just alluded to—a man as excellent and benevolent as he is enlightened—has at an immense outlay given to the town a public library and museum. In the elegant and spacious halls of this institution, where I had the pleasure of giving a lecture, I saw large numbers of students in the evening, when the hours of work were over; and the noble founder has the satisfaction of knowing that it is regularly attended by three thousand persons. Surely the happiness of the man who has thus thrown open the portals of knowledge to thousands of eager souls must be great indeed! The opportunities of obtaining good books, attending good classes, and of joining improving associations are not yet sufficiently numerous. And this is more especially the case with regard to women, who find themselves shut out from the evening reading-rooms or debating society. Judicious association with others, and the

chance of learning from the excellent periodicals of the day what is moving and stirring in the world around us are most valuable, and I should gladly see the establishment of reading-rooms for women, on a simple and healthy basis, in all districts. The expenses need not be great; and surely many ladies of acknowledged character and position might be found to lend their countenance and support to such undertakings. A focus of help and instruction might thus very easily be founded in every neighbourhood. I sympathize most earnestly with working men and women's colleges and clubs, and with mutual intercourse in connexion with intellectual subjects. Class prejudices may be most easily removed, and persons of different ranks of life may learn to discover the good and interesting qualities of those above and below their own social grade. I look forward to some bright time when the evening lecture, the scientific or literary class, the art-exhibition will drive the vulgar and depraving music-hall, the tavern and the gin palace out of the field. This, of course, can only take place when the taste of the masses has been raised by education; when the minds nurtured upon the wholesome food of moral teaching, science, natural history, and the countless resources of learning and art, will turn with disgust from sensual and debasing pleasures. In the neighbourhood of every one there must be some institution capable of affording, in a certain degree, benefits of this kind, and I would earnestly beg all present to endeavour,

as far as they can, to countenance and support the same. A little aid and encouragement are of great importance in the organization and carrying on of these centres of education. But it is not enough that all classes should have the advantages of education set before them. It is also necessary that all classes should have a reasonable amount of time to enjoy and benefit by them. Therefore I hail with delight the shortening of the hours of labour, and I confess that I sympathize heartily with the weary slaves of mechanical toil who endeavour to obtain less work and more pay. Although I should never desire to encourage idleness, or the defrauding of the rightful demands of an employer, I do think that this question is one calling for considerable revision; and it has always appeared to me that the remuneration for the labour of the hands, muscles, and sinews has not been at all in proportion to its *real* value to the community at large or to individuals. Like Sisyphus of old fable, we see Labour toiling up the steep, with his heavy block of stone ever ready to roll down again, in the daily and well-nigh hopeless repetition of ceaseless toil. I rejoice in the further working out of the principle of union among the operative classes—thus affording to labour a hopeful and encouraging prospect in its old struggle with capital. When we consider the vast importance of good service to the family as well as to the employer, none can slight nor underprize its great value. Now, after a long life of

ceaseless daily toil, through "the heat of the sun and the winter's bitter rages," the labourer who has manfully helped to amass the millions which fall to the share of capital, may find an asylum for his old age in the parish workhouse, and a doctor for his infirmities in the parish dispensary; or if particularly lucky, he may get a pension of a few shillings weekly from some wealthy and beneficent landowner, to whom it is more agreeable that the poor submissive wretch should be the recipient of voluntary bounty, than that he should develope into the sturdy, independent old English veteran, who has earned the right to live as he chooses upon the just fruits of his industry. Surely this state of things is neither right nor just. Therefore I give my heartiest sympathy to all endeavours to ennoble labour—whether of the head or hands—and to strengthen its influence. I am weary of the perpetual cry that before privileges are granted to those who have by circumstances or otherwise been systematically deprived of them, education must be first conferred, as a primary and preparatory blessing. The experience of the years succeeding the Reform Bill has proved that the possession of legal and constitutional rights and responsibilities is in itself one of the best kinds of education. Should we have had this general upheaving of the great substratum of the social structure, this healthy yearning for life, light, and a fair share of power, if the impetus had not been given by the concession of political

liberty? Where is it that the greater intelligence is to be found? Is it among the drowsy, heavy agricultural labourers, untrammelled by the possession of electoral responsibility, and unfettered by patriotic interests? Or is it among the energetic and thoughtful artisans of our cities, where every man who is a householder has the stimulus to action and reflection which the possession of electoral responsibility brings with it? And I would add this remark—that the classes who have retained privileges, powers, and prizes for themselves, themselves show an infinitely greater need of the best sort of education—that of the heart—that of the principles of justice and generosity—than do the classes whose ignorance is accepted, fostered and abetted, and then cast in their faces as an accusation and an obstruction. We need education to *keep* benefits, as much as we do to *acquire* them. I seriously believe that the education now most needed by the upper classes is one which will be best gained from sympathetic intercourse with the lower classes, and by the concession and just appreciation of the rights of the latter as human beings—as native sons of the soil. I confess that labour, whether of the head or hands, has my entire sympathy. Honest work is a grand thing, and by means of it a man may proudly hold up his head among the noblest. I wish that every unworthy feeling of false shame could be blotted out of people's minds as to the loss of caste which in certain circles is

tacitly considered to be entailed by earning a livelihood otherwise than by means of the leading professions. Of course no one admits that he or she could be ashamed of anything so theoretically honest and honourable; nevertheless, to use a familiar expression, there is a great deal of unconfessed flunkeyism on this subject, and the canker of superficial worldliness lurks often where least to be expected. To be sincere and independent in mind and thought, courage is most necessary; and it is the cultivation of such straightforward, home-bred qualities, which appears to be most needed in the present day. As was once said of books, we may now say of learning, "there is no end." But even higher than learning I would place the solid qualities of steadfastness, truthfulness, fortitude, courage, and justice. And not alone are we in want of those of everyday life, but the subtler developments of generosity, gentleness, courtesy—that true refinement of the heart which is at the root of good manners—seem to be equally required. I should indeed gladly welcome a greater respect for the ideal; and it appears to me that women, from the special tendency of their natures, can do much in this direction. As I before observed, apart from justice, truth, honesty, and all the great qualities being cultivated because they are right, the more general appreciation of their æsthetic beauty and moral grace seems to me to be required. It must not be imagined that I under-estimate the great value of the training

of the conscience. Conscience is indeed that nobler essence of our being which helps most materially to keep the moral atmosphere pure, and its cultivation is necessarily of supreme importance; and though in the larger affairs of life lapses of moral integrity are perhaps less common, still in the less weighty transactions and details of social life less regard is paid to the obtrusive monitor than might be desired; and hence the petty jealousies, hatreds, and unworthiness which accompany even what is called good society.

Naturally this selfish policy deprives society of a number of its best features, tinging with bitterness many a heart, which turns with disgust from the paltry superficiality of the world to the comparative retirement of a more limited circle, or into complete solitude. Formerly people became hermits, monks, anchorites; now retirement is sought by many in a life of usefulness, in the humble by-paths of well-doing, among the crowded streets of our city. It can hardly be denied that we need greater sincerity, more of the spirit of self-sacrifice and of helpfulness in social life, to render its precincts really refreshing and pleasant to any but the mere butterflies of fashion.

Almost the chief requisite for happy and satisfactory intercourse with others is courteous sincerity. I would inculcate this excellent quality with the greatest diligence in all stages of education, but

especially I would hold it up for the reverence and practice of the young.

All acknowledge that it is an excellent thing to be able to say of a man that his word is as good as his bond. The economical loss to society by the rarity of this principle is incalculable; and John Stuart Mill never wrote truer words than when he said—"The advantage to mankind of being able to trust one another penetrates into every crevice and cranny of human life."

But though we have gained much when, in our system of training, we have insured trustworthiness, uprightness, and integrity, we have still only the skeleton, the framework of our model member of society.

To clothe the dry bones with life, those gentler qualities to which I have before alluded must be carefully instilled, fostered, and exercised: the spirit of self-devotion at least, if not of self-sacrifice, should accompany us through life as a constant companion, as a joy-giving, hope-inspiring atmosphere. We are all capable of adding to or taking away from the happiness of others—but it is not enough to avoid taking away; and though the ready hand and the ready heart to assist in the structure of another's well-being may not be common as natural gifts or natural impulses, the will should be distinctly awakened and trained to contribute to the welfare of our neighbours. In social life, and in a still greater degree in family life, the spirit of self-sacrifice has a

wide field for exercise. The continual changing of circumstances, the play of different dispositions, the constant household friction, all call for forbearance and self-abnegation—for the practical exercise of that spirit which is at once the root of Christianity, as well as that of the highest and purest philosophy; and which, as before remarked, is at the foundation of good manners, good morals, and good lives.

Perhaps my standard of education may be considered as involving too great a sacrifice of personal feeling, but I believe that in life, as in all else, there is a certain art which simplifies and organizes. Our continental friends have always had a great reputation for this, which among them is known as *savoir vivre*, or how to live; and though I should not like us to exchange all that is English for all that is French, there is much in the easy and well-bred courtesy of the latter nation which we might do well to make our own. Education should teach us how to make the best of life, and how systematically to cultivate a happy contented frame of mind. And that beauty is to be one of the chief constituents of our happiness is evident in the countless forms of grace and loveliness in earth, air, sea, and sky. And not only the external, but the internal world offers endless consolations and compensations, of which we shall do well to remind those in our care in their hours of depression and misgiving. The consciousness of duties performed, of high aims and lofty desires,

can gild earth's darkest paths with rays of light and unfading splendour.

Education should certainly rig and fit us out for the special duties we may have to fulfil, and the position which we may be called upon to occupy. But as I so especially wish to impress as my conviction, it should also teach us how to adorn our lives—how to introduce into them the greatest beauty, happiness, and sympathy. And the purer the tastes the more possible will this be. The whole world of Art is there as our treasure-house, whence to draw stores of delight and culture. I differ entirely from those persons who make a point of depreciating the educational value of the Fine Arts. I am entirely opposed to the indifference which such views betray to the craving for and need of beauty in the human soul; and I am inclined to believe that the disapproval expressed by such persons is a consequence, not only of absolute ignorance of some of the highest manifestations of the imagination, but that it also proceeds from the inability of a certain type of intellect and nature to penetrate the subtler instincts of genius. And this branch of my subject I regard as specially in accordance with the endeavours of the Society under whose auspices I have the honour of addressing you this evening, and who, in their untiring efforts to open to all the avenues leading to the culture and gratification of the imaginative faculties, deserve hearty support and co-operation.

There is another branch of my subject to which I should like to allude—I mean the imperfection of discipline which, in comparison with continental nations, is to be observed in our general system of education and training. As a striking instance of the power of discipline, I may refer to the triumph of the German arms in the late Franco-Prussian war. On the German side nothing had been left to chance—all was forethought, foreplanned; the result of the most careful method, the most uncompromising attention to detail. Germany did not conquer because it was braver, more heroic, or more talented than France; but because every detail was calculated, every emergency foreseen. The spirit of order was supreme. This is an almost unfailing way to insure success, and most people are familiar with the dictum which calls genius "a consummate capacity for taking trouble." I do not quite agree with this, but there is a good deal in the saying. Our system of education in England is defective in general discipline—and specially so in those points pertaining to manners and social bearing. As an evidence of this among the middle or upper-middle classes, I will refer to a paper read upon the "Personal Bearing of Europeans in India towards Natives," by Nourozjee Furdoonjee, Esq., before the National Indian Association, on January 24th of this year, and which has recently been published.

As an illustration of this national shortcoming, as

manifested among the operative class, I will quote some remarks made by Mr. Escher of Zurich, an engineer and cotton manufacturer, formerly employing nearly 2000 working men of many different nations, in his evidence annexed to the Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners in 1840. "As workmen only," Mr. Escher remarked, "the preference is undoubtedly due to the English, because, as we find them, they are all trained to special branches on which they have no comparatively superior training, and have concentrated all their thoughts. As men of business or general usefulness, and as men with whom an employer would best like to be surrounded, I should, however, decidedly prefer the Saxons and the Swiss, but more especially the Saxons, because they have had a very careful general education, which has extended their capacities beyond any special employment, and rendered them fit to take up, after a short preparation, any employment to which they may be called."

The writer then further remarks upon the moral characteristics of the English workmen. He continues:—"While in respect to the work to which they have been trained they are the most skilful, they are in conduct the most disorderly, disreputable, and unruly, and least respectful and trustworthy of any nation whatsoever whom we have employed; and in saying this I express the experience of every manufacturer on the Continent to whom I have

spoken, and especially of the English manufacturers, who make the loudest complaints. These characteristics of depravity do not apply to the English workmen who have received an education, but attach to the others in the degree in which they are in want of it. When the uneducated English workmen are released from the bonds of iron discipline in which they have been restrained by their employers in England, and are treated with the urbanity and friendly feeling which the more educated workmen on the Continent expect and receive from their employers, they, the English workmen, completely lose their balance, and, after a certain time, become totally unmanageable and useless." Now this—be it remarked—was written in 1840, consequently about thirty-four years ago. The wider spread of education, it is to be hoped, may have modified in a considerable degree the grounds for such censure. The Saxons to whom allusion has been made are a peculiarly courteous and genial race, with great taste for study, and possessing general culture. And although their poverty is frequently extreme, I have been told by a well-informed native of the kingdom that good education is the rule. They thus start with immense advantages over the workmen of our country. In considering these failings in some of the operative classes of our countrymen, it is only fair, at the same time, to take into consideration the very trying effects of constant labour upon the nerves and spirits. After ten or twelve or more

hours of hard and continuous bodily application, it may be easily imagined that the raw, uneducated labourer has little thought but of rest, or of indulgence in the ignoble amusements which shall prevent his being too painfully sensible of the ponderous weight of wearied bone and muscle which he bears. His over-wrought system, unrelieved by any mental resources, collapses into hopeless stupidity or seeks oblivion in drunken frolic. The cultivated artisan of our Mechanics' Institutes is, of course, a very different person from this unfortunate wretch. To him the arts and sciences have opened their magic portals, and his inclinations and capacities, trained to a higher standard, recoil with disgust from low pleasures and pursuits. Among this class of men are to be found large hearts, and intellects and abilities of the highest order. The intelligent conversations I have heard at social gatherings of educated artisans have made me blush for the vapid kettledrum and the languid "at home" of some of the upper classes. I remember upon one occasion being called upon to preside at one of the tea-tables of a similar social meeting, and I very soon found myself taking part in an animated controversy upon Shakspeare. I considered myself, from a special study of our great poet, in some degree entitled to have an opinion respecting his various excellences. But I quickly discovered that my antagonist was so well versed in the poet's plays, in the historical traditions, and the various

criticisms upon them, that I felt convinced I should gain more by listening than speaking. Upon another side the conversation turned upon painting; the chief speaker, who was a decorator, had been in Germany in the pursuit of his calling, and had studied with good effect the different styles of painting which had come under his notice. Of course these individuals had had more leisure, more education than ordinary workmen—but I mention the incident as showing what is possible under moderately favourable circumstances.

To revert to my subject of regular employments requiring close attention. It must be remembered that although the same give special power and practical insight to those engaged upon them, they have their disadvantages in the mechanical tone of thought and feeling which they induce. Even occupations of an agreeable and entertaining character, when pursued systematically, degenerate into business-like and comparatively uninteresting routine. The ideas run in one groove, and existence becomes a sort of mental treadmill. Now if this is the case with delightful pursuits, such as literature and art, how terribly must it be so with the lower callings, involving incessant and exhaustive physical labour. These considerations may serve to render us more tolerant of the ignorance of the daily labourer, who, feeling that all he can expect or count upon in this life is his weekly pittance, and labouring under the disadvantage of his narrow circle of ideas and cramped or undeveloped

aspirations, is, no doubt, often tempted to say to himself—"Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!" In the life of everybody there should be some opportunity for the imagination to develope, and so to become a source of pleasure and instruction. We need more public holidays, on which the delights and wonders of nature, art, and science may be examined and enjoyed. The five or six days in the year allotted to amusement or recreation appear to me to be ridiculously out of comparison with the drudgery of the whole year round. I cannot blame the miner if he only wishes to have four days of his heavy, darksome toil; but I should be glad if he knew how to enjoy and spend the other days rationally. Here the omissions and shortcomings of past times come upon us. People seize hold of the fact with avidity, that the lowest class of labourers are in the habit of brutalizing their opportunities of leisure, when, in justice, former ages should be blamed for the bad foundation laid by ignorance and neglect in the minds of the labouring classes, thereby incapacitating them for pleasures of a higher order. I have not attempted to reduce my ideas on the subject of education to a special system. The observations I have made I leave for the further elaboration and consideration of others. The sincerity with which they have been offered will, I trust, be the best apology for their imperfections and deficiencies.

I don't know whether I may parenthetically venture on a personal remark just so far as to notice the immense advantage a lecturer on these topics possessed in being able herself to challenge criticism on æsthetic grounds. I very much doubt whether certain venerable ladies who affect the compartment labelled "for ladies *only*" in the Reading-room of the British Museum could safely have made some of the remarks Madame Ronniger did; but our lecturess declaimed with the air of a Rachel, and no critic—at least no male critic—could possibly have complained of her denunciations.

It was quite a picture to see the face of Mr. Morell, the secretary of the League, as he sat close by me and smiled seraphically at the stroking down his Society got from the fair hands of the speaker. Personally he looked as though, like Oliver Twist, he wanted a "little more" of it. It must have been very agreeable.

There were one or two faint attempts at applause during the course of the lecture, especially at the portions which denounced pigeon-shooting, and contrasted the attractions offered by the Sunday League with those of the low music hall; and also the suggestion for "more holidays." But the same idea of consecrated ground which made my friend's head uneasy beneath his gossamer hushed the plaudits down to the merest *soupçon*. It was quite evident, however, that the

matter of the lecture gave satisfaction; and the manner of its delivery could not fail to do so.

Then followed the selection from the "Creation." An adequate chorus ascended the platform, and three soloists took their places in front. The band wisely abstained from giving us the representation of Chaos in septet, though it was down for them in the programme. The music was in all respects above par, and the selection judiciously abbreviated. Some of the choicest *morceaux*, such as "With Verdure clad," "In native Worth," and "Graceful Consort," were thoroughly appreciated by the audience; and the whole concluded with the chorus "The Heavens are telling."

When we rose to go out we perceived of how large an audience we had been atoms; and my friend observed to me—nor could I contradict him—that, if this were a violation of the Fourth Commandment at all, it was "a very rational kind of Sabbath-breaking." I did not feel quite clear then, nor am I at all decided now, to what extent *æsthetic* considerations biassed his judgment, or even my own; but I only know that if ever I hear of the Sunday League in any successive year putting up one of the above-mentioned dowagers from the British Museum to lecture in Madame Ronniger's place, I will decoy him from his pew again, and hear what he says about "Rational Sabbath-breaking" then.

INTERVIEWING A MORMON ELDER.

Among the Thousand and One Nights which I have spent in my examination of the different religious bodies in London, there is one community which has hitherto dodged me like a Will-o'-the-wisp. It is that of the Latter-day Saints. Some sects have coyly stood aloof like an aged wallflower in a ball-room, only to own the soft impeachment at last that they really liked to be taken notice of, though they did talk of "rude men" at first, and somewhat too effusively state their wish to "blush unseen." But Mormonism was determined not to be "done." So was I, however; and I have here to record my victory. I have interviewed an Elder too fresh from Utah to be proof against my wiles. I have been face to face with a gentleman redolent of the air of the Great Salt Lake; I know—if not all about spiritual wives—a great deal more than I did a day or two before; and, with the impetuosity of a tyro, I hasten to unbosom. My ideas may be crude, for the Book of Mormon and the principles of nineteenth century polygamy are not to be assimilated with a hop, skip, and a jump; but they have at least the merit of freshness. I have the latest intelligence from Utah. My knowledge

has been long delayed, but it is posted up to the present time at all events.

Two or three Sundays before, I had seen by an advertisement in the newspapers that the Saints were going to hold a conference in Limehouse. Bishops and Elders from the Salt Lake were to preside; and immediately, as Melancholy did the youth in Gray's Elegy, I "marked them for my own." The Sunday, of course, was wet—all the Sundays were just about the fag-end of October and the beginning of November of that year—and Limehouse was not exactly the most enticing quarter of the metropolis to tempt one's steps on a Sabbath eve; but I would go if I had to swim the distance. A facetious passenger in the omnibus, gorgeous with Brummagem jewellery, and fragrant with rose hair-oil, remarked that the rain put him in mind of the eve of the Deluge. Limehouse was sludgy beyond a doubt, and the City churches seemed to be drawing, if possible, smaller congregations than usual, as we paddled our weary way along amid the clanging bells that Sunday evening. After a long and most amphibious journey, we got to our destination, which was some public hall whose high-flown title I had forgotten. This was the rendezvous, for the time being, of the Saints; and in I went, with that boldness which I have gained by much frequenting strange places of worship. Time was when I used to hang about modestly at the door, half hoping that one of the faithful, seeing my state of heathen darkness,

would step out and ask me in. But I did not hesitate that evening, or at least only for a moment.

Some twelve or fourteen gentlemen were arranged in a semicircle on the stage, sitting in chairs like a troupe of pious Christy Minstrels, and they kept on making speeches one after the other, none of which attracted me in the least, because they all shirked the question which was uppermost in my mind, and I fancy is uppermost in the mind of most of the unregenerate, in reference to Mormonism. They spoke of their persecutions, and how it was sufficient to say of a man "He's a Mormon" to exile him from the pale of respect. They invited the East-enders to come out to Utah and prosper. They told us they had "emigrated" 150 from London last year—and really that was all. The rest might have been the utterances of anything, from Evangelicals down to Jumpers; there was nothing distinctive. And yet it was with a light heart that I went home again and read President Smith's "Answers to Questions, including the Revelation on Celestial Marriage," which I bought in the Hall for fourpence-halfpenny, and devoured as well as the light of the railway carriage would let me. Light-hearted I say, because I had got the address of Elder Burton, President of the London Conference. I had run my Latter-day Saints to earth at last.

I wrote to this same Elder Burton, and asked an interview, which he graciously accorded me, and of which, I need scarcely say, I gladly availed myself.

I found Bishop's Grove, Islington, where he resided, a little unepiscopal *cul-de-sac* close to Dalston Junction. The passage was dark when I entered, so that I could only see it was a female who let me in. She deposited me at once in a cosy front parlour, and saying, "Brother Burton, a gentleman," vanished down the stairs or into the back parlour—I have no notion which. Elder Burton, whom I recognised again, had another gentleman with him, who I soon found had that very day arrived from Utah, where he held no less a post than that of barber to Brigham Young himself. I was delighted. I was actually in presence of one who had shaven the President's saintly face! We proceeded to business at once. Elder Burton asked me to state what was the principal question in my mind in reference to the sect; and I flatter myself I blushed becomingly as I simpered "The ladies." I wanted to ask about "celestial marriage," respecting which I got no information at the Limehouse Conference. In fact, I told him that I failed to gain any distinctive idea of his tenets there. "Was not that," said the Elder, who was a grave and sedate man, but Yankee to the marrow, "because you came with your mind running on one idee, and you took no notice of anything else?" I thought the Elder's explanation very probably correct; and he then begged me to notice as a preliminary fact, that polygamy was no rationale of the ill-repute of Mormonism. Persecution preceded the custom, and was, so said the

Elder, due to the fact that the Saints revived primitive Christianity—that one uniform claim of all the sects. "You try and revive the teaching of Christ in the Church," said Elder Burton, "and you'll be persecuted just as we were in the States." The barber—whom I am obliged to designate thus, for I never learnt his name—here cut in with a chronological remark to clinch me. The doctrine of polygamy was not publicly proclaimed until 1852. It was believed in before, but not formulated till then, and Smith was "martyred" in 1844. "So you see it couldn't have been plurality that brought us into disrepute. No; it was primitive Christianity."

Our trio was here enlarged by the entrance of an exceedingly imposing gentleman in a dress suit of resplendent black, and hair to match, beautifully oiled and parted down the middle. Whether it was the contrast of the small parlour I know not, but he seemed to me seven feet high. He was quite of a different calibre from the others. Elder Burton was, as I have said, "elderly" in point of gravity rather than of age. The tonsorial gentleman looked—well, looked like a barber who had thriven on the President's head and chin; but the new-comer was evidently a "personage." I am as ignorant now as I was then of his name or rank, and this very ignorance, combined with his sleek attire and pale, close-shaven face, will make him ever an object of mystery to me. He was every inch a gentleman, though, and

thoroughly posted up in the principles of the sect, saying little while the Elder or the barber was talking, but always coming in to floor me when I fancied I had got them up in a corner. For instance, I conceded that polygamy was permitted in the Old Testament, but not in the New. "Will you put your finger on a text which condemns it for any class of men?" asked the Elder, and I quoted the words, "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife." The Elder and the barber (I wish I knew his name) were silent; but, after a brief pause, the gentleman in black smiled sweetly, and showed me his ivory teeth as he said, "Yes, one *at least;* but it does not say he must not have more than one." I collapsed for the time being. The case of the Levirate Elder Burton thought rather in favour of polygamy than against it, as it was scarcely probable all the seven brothers were bachelors. I asked him when and how he thought polygamy died out, and he said in the first century of Christianity, and through the corrupt example of Rome, where monogamy and its attendant evils prevailed. In reference to the extent of practical polygamy in Utah, they told me that scarcely one-tenth of the people availed themselves of it, though fully holding the doctrine. "That doctrine," said Elder Burton, "is due, not to the cause generally supposed, but simply to the desire to raise up a righteous seed, and also to provide for the excess of females over males, which is Nature's own argument in favour of

polygamy. Were the low motive usually assigned the real one, polygamy would be the most expensive way of carrying it out." I assented to that, and also to the terrible prevalence of what is technically termed the "social evil" in monogamic countries. "Indeed," added the Elder, "if concupiscence be the object of marriage, we consider the person so contracting it to be in danger of condemnation. We hand such a man over to the devil."

Then it was that I asked the most delicate question of all, which I felt I must ask or die. Did either of the gentlemen I had the honour of addressing enjoy a plurality of domestic bliss? The Elder was silent; the resplendent gentleman in black answered not; but the barber, with an air of triumph, replied that he had two establishments, and a very large family in each. "In Utah, sir, a man is proud to say he has a large number of children. He is ashamed to say the reverse." "And the blessing of the Lord," rejoined the Elder, "rests on the Saints in proportion to the largeness of their families." I could not help thinking of a story Mr. Henry Russell used to tell before he sang "A good time coming." He was singing it once, and when he came to the verse—

> Every child shall be a stay,
> To make his right arm stronger;
> The happier he the more he has—
> Wait a little longer!

a working man got up and interrupted the performance by saying, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Russell,

but could you give one some idea of *when* this is likely to take place?" Evidently that gentleman had a quiver full, which would have secured him favour both human and Divine in Utah.

From this we passed to general topics, most of which I found pretty well covered by the pamphlet I purchased at Limehouse, namely, "The Rise, Progress, and Travels (*sic*) of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, including the Revelation on Celestial Marriage." In the latter I find a distinct revelation appertaining to Emma Smith, the first wife of the saintly Joseph. She was to "receive all that should be given to my servant Joseph," and "mine handmaid Emma Smith was to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else." I insinuated, in the politest manner, that it might be very nice for Joseph, but did Emma, as a rule, like it? How did the ladies stand the practice of plurality? Well, said the Elder, they had their "little feelings," but then they were educated up to it. The barber was silent; and I could not repress an irreverent thought as to whether he ever had his hair combed by either of his dual belongings. There were fewer cases for the divorce court in Utah than in monogamic countries, I was informed. In fact, the Salt Lake country was a polygamous Paradise, if all were true. There were 70,000 square miles of territory, with 113,000 population. That was indeed a contrast to our crowded acres in England. "And

as for religious toleration, why, if you, or any other minister, no matter of what body, were to come to Salt Lake City, we would give you a hall with an audience of 10,000 or 12,000, and the finest organ in the world, with leave to have what service you liked, and to preach to the people as you choose." "Well, I'll think it over," I said, as I rose to go. "But I don't think you will do much good if you do preach," said the gentleman in black. I quite agreed with him, and told him so. As a recognition of his superior qualifications, I asked him why he did not break ground at the West-end of town; whereupon, and only for one moment, he waxed warm, and said, "Will you find me a respectable public hall where I *can* break ground? I have tried for three years, and cannot find a place." This, he said, was religious toleration in England. I really was surprised at this, for I should have thought anybody could get a hall in London—"for a consideration."

On my homeward journey I amused myself by imagining what my fellow-travellers could possibly think I was, for I held conspicuously displayed a copy of the *Salt Lake Semi-Weekly Herald*, which my friend the barber had brought that day from Utah and kindly lent me to beguile the tedium of my return from Dalston. It is decidedly smart. Among its "inklings" I read, for instance, "Applejack parties are on in Vermont." "The hog-cholera is prevailing to a large extent in Ohio." "A Galesbury

barber advertises himself as a professor of crinicultural abscission and criniological tripsis." Under the significant head of "The Ladies," "Ohio has graduated another female lawyer. She is famous for stepping three feet in her morning walk." "Vassor College devours forty-two good-sized water melons for dinner. Angels have appetites as well as other folks." "Smoking seems to be a very prevalent disease in young ladydom. They smoke cigarettes—by the doctor's orders." "An Illinoisian, who has the mammas of three of his temporary matrimonial partners still living under his roof, heads a movement to procure an amendment of the divorce laws, including mother-in-law in the process of separation." Even the items of general intelligence are not without interest, from the way they are put, though we may be unacquainted with the persons mentioned. Under the title of "Got Back," occurs the following: "Our friend Mr. L. U. Colbath and his fair bride returned from Fr'isco Monday, where they have been passing a portion of the honeymoon. We saw Lem, and he appeared about as happy as a mortal being of the male persuasion could well be, huge smiles dancing all over his good-natured face. If he wasn't thinking about his wife at the time, then we can't look into the recesses of a man's thoughts. In a long life of observation we never saw a bachelor who wore such a long and loud smile of perfect contentment and happiness as does our worthy friend." Decidedly

my perusal of this specimen of journalism was not among the least edifying fruits of my long-sought Mormon interview.

On a subsequent occasion, I had strayed to Penton Street, Islington, one Sunday evening, in quest of a certain sect to whom I have already adverted; and, not finding my heretical friends as punctual as could be wished, I strolled into a little huckster's shop to do some Sunday trading in the shape of a note-book, and also, should circumstances permit, to get information. A somewhat lengthened experience in the way of descriptive journalism has taught me always to get into conversation with everybody. One is sure to learn something. I did on this occasion.

Having made my small purchase, I asked some leading question on the subject of the special Heterodoxy of which I was in search. The good woman of the shop, who was both comely and conversational, did not know much about that, but was hard on the demerits of another body that had come and settled in that street—the Latter-day Saints.

"The what, ma'am?" I said. "Do you mean the Mormonites?"

She did.

Eureka, I had found them. The Dancing Academy, past the next turning on the right. I was off like a shot. Yes; there, sure enough, was a blessed board informing me that the Saints gathered there on Sunday mornings and evenings, and also on

Thursday evenings at S. I would go on the Thursday evening. I could not wait a week.

The next Thursday happened to be the day when the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh made their public entry into London; and all the metropolis consequently was gravitating westwards about 8 P.M., to see the illuminations. But I felt that the Saints would be above such trifles as these. What does a wife or two more or less signify to a Latter day Saint?

Due north did I turn my pilgrim footsteps, then, and when I got to the Dancing Academy found it shut. Religious Dancing Academies always seem to be shut when I attempt them. I ventured to knock at the door, and ask if there was to be a meeting; and the slatternly girl who answered said, "Yes, but they haven't come yet," and banged the door in my face, as though she did not affect the Latter-day Saints. I had to walk up and down; and really began to think the people would know me in Penton Street. I saw my comely stationer in her little candle-lit shop, and should certainly have invested in another note-book, only I saw her husband—or one whom I presumed to stand in that relation—behind the counter with her, and I did not quite know what the consequences might be, if I went in and abruptly announced myself as coming from the Mormonite meeting-house to talk to his wife. So I recommenced my sentinel walk.

I had seen, but not noticed particularly, two indi-

viduals muffled in Inverness capes, with brigand hats pulled over their brows, and was thinking what an opening Mr. G. P. R. James might have made out of this circumstance as we passed and re-passed each other in that slummy street. I felt sure they were "Saints;" but it was not until after about our twentieth *rencontre* that two Transatlantic beards emerged above the surface of those swathing cloaks, and at the same time each of the strangers looked out from below his *sombrero* upon me, and I found they were no strangers, but my old friends Elder Burton and the barber—and the barber was no more anonymous, for Elder Burton anticipated my greeting of the tonsorial professsor by saying by way of introduction, "Mr. Squires; you know Mr. Squires, don't you?" I did; and felt rejoiced that Mr. Squires and his double household could now go down to history with their proper cognomens.

Contrary to my expectations, the Saints *did* go to the illuminations; at least none of them turned up for Prayer Meeting that particular Thursday evening while I waited, and I stopped latish. By the advice of Elder Burton I determined not to come again on a week night, but to time my visit on a Sunday, when I should hear some preaching.

Pending that experience, it may not be amiss to add a quotation or two from the "Answers to Questions," especially on those fundamental points where the majority of readers will probably require to be

informed, as I did myself prior to my visit to Elder Burton. The information as to Utah and Salt Lake City is exceedingly interesting, and calculated very much to enlarge one's notions on the gigantic scale of the plans carried out by this strange Society. But, apart from the fact that these more mundane matters have been fully described by Mr. Hepworth Dixon and others, I feel that I have scarcely space for them here; even if their insertion would be quite congruous with my present purpose; which, it may be necessary occasionally to remind my readers, is definitely a religious one.

The preface to the work runs thus:—

"As President Brigham Young and the Church authorities are frequently called upon for information pertaining to the Church history, also the history and settlement of these valleys of the mountains, with the educational, agricultural, horticultural, and irrigation statistics pertaining thereto, &c., it has been deemed wisdom to write and collate such items as would satisfactorily answer the generality of questions propounded; hence the publication of this pamphlet has been undertaken with the sincere hope that all honest inquirers after the truth of the Latter-day Work and the material development of the resources of these mountains, may be refreshed and gratified by the perusal thereof.

"Historian's Office,
"*Salt Lake City, July*, 1869."

On the subject of the original revelation the following "History" is from the pen of President Joseph Smith, and was written by him in 1842, for publication in the Chicago *Democrat* :—

"I was born in the town of Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, on the 23rd of December, A.D. 1805. When ten years old, my parents removed to Palmyra, New York, where we resided about four years, and from thence we removed to the town of Manchester.

"My father was a farmer and taught me the art of husbandry. When about fourteen years of age, I began to reflect upon the importance of being prepared for a future state, and upon inquiring the plan of salvation, I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment; if I went to one society, they referred me to one plan, and another to another, each one pointing to his own particular creed as the *summum bonum* of perfection. Considering that all could not be right, and that God could not be the author of so much confusion, I determined to investigate the subject more fully, believing that if God had a church, it would not be split up into factions, and that if he taught one society to worship one way, and administer in one set of ordinances, he would not teach another principles which were diametrically opposed. Believing the word of God, I had confidence in the declaration of James, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given

him.' I retired to a secret place in a grove and began to call upon the Lord. While fervently engaged in supplication, my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noonday. They told me that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as His church and kingdom. And I was expressly commanded to 'go not after them;' at the same time receiving a promise that the fulness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me.

"On the evening of the 21st of September, A.D. 1823, while I was praying unto God, and endeavouring to exercise faith in the precious promises of Scripture, on a sudden, a light like that of day, only of a far purer and more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room; indeed, the first sight was as though the house was filled with consuming fire; the appearance produced a shock that affected the whole body; in a moment a personage stood before me, surrounded with a glory yet greater than that with which I was already surrounded. This messenger proclaimed himself to be an angel of God, sent to bring the joyful tidings, that the covenant which God made with ancient Israel was at

hand to be fulfilled, that the preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence; that the time was at hand for the gospel, in all its fulness, to be preached in power unto all nations, that a people might be prepared for the millennial reign.

"I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of His purposes in this glorious dispensation.

"I was also informed concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, and shown who they were, and from whence they came; a brief sketch of their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments, of their righteousness and iniquity, and the blessings of God being finally withdrawn from them as a people, was made known unto me. I was also told where there were deposited some plates, on which were engraven an abridgment of the records of the ancient prophets that had existed on this continent. The angel appeared to me three times the same night, and unfolded the same things. After having received many visits from the angels of God, unfolding the majesty and glory of the events that should transpire in the last days, on the morning of the 22nd of September, A.D. 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into my hands.

"These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold; each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as

common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume, as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction, and much skill in the art of engraving. With the records was found a curious instrument, which the ancients called 'Urim and Thummim,' which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate.

"Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record, by the gift and power of God.

"In this important and interesting book the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement by a colony that came from the Tower of Babel at the confusion of languages, to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. We are informed by these records that America in ancient times had been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites, and came directly from the Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the

country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country. This book also tells us that our Saviour made his appearance upon this continent after his resurrection, that he planted the gospel here in all its fulness and richness and power and blessing; that they had apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists; the same order, the same priesthood, the same ordinances, gifts, powers, and blessings as were enjoyed on the eastern continent; that the people were cut off in consequence of their transgressions; that the last of their prophets who existed among them was commanded to write an abridgment of their prophecies, history, &c., and to hide it up in the earth, and that it should come forth and be united with the Bible for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the last days. For a more particular account I would refer to the Book of Mormon, which can be purchased at Nauvoo, or from any of our travelling elders.

"As soon as the news of this discovery was made known, false reports, misrepresentations and slander flew, as on the wings of the wind, in every direction; the house was frequently beset by mobs, and evil designing persons. Several times I was shot at, and very narrowly escaped, and every device was made use of to get the plates away from me, but the power and blessing of God attended me, and several began to believe my testimony.

"On the 6th of April, 1830, the 'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' was first organized in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, State of New York. Some few were called and ordained by the spirit of revelation and prophecy, and began to preach as the spirit gave them utterance, and though weak, yet were they strengthened by the power of God, and many were brought to repentance, were immersed in the water, and were filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They saw visions and prophesied, devils were cast out, and the sick healed by the laying on of hands. From that time the work rolled forth with astonishing rapidity."

I suppose no one can read these records without tracing them to their evident source as a sort of coarse reproduction of Mahommedanism. The revelation on the subject of celestial marriage is somewhat lengthy, but I have tried in vain to abridge it and at the same time to preserve its characteristic style. I therefore give it at length, and fancy the impression of my readers will be something like my own—that the revelation leans much more to the interests of Joseph than of Emma Smith:—

"REVELATION ON CELESTIAL MARRIAGE,

"GIVEN TO JOSEPH SMITH, NAUVOO, JULY 12TH, 1843, NOT PUBLISHED TILL 1852.

"1. Verily, thus saith the Lord unto *you*, my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as *you* have inquired

of my hand, to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David, and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines, behold! and lo, I am the Lord *thy* God, and will answer *thee* as touching this matter; therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto *you;* for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same; for behold! I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant, and be permitted to enter into my glory; for all who will have a blessing at my hands, shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as was instituted from before the foundation of the world; and as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof, must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

"2. And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these:—All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connexions, associations, or expectations, that are not made, and entered into, and sealed, by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed,

whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time, on whom this power and the keys of this Priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue or force, in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end, have an end when men are dead.

"3. Behold! mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name? Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed? And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you before the world was? I am the Lord thy God, and I give unto you this commandment, that no man shall come unto the Father but by me, or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord; and everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me, or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God; for whatsoever things remaineth, are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me, shall be shaken and destroyed.

"4. Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me, nor by my word;

and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world, and she with him, their covenant and marriage is not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world; therefore, when they are out of the world, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory; for these angels did not abide my law, therefore they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity, and from henceforth are not Gods, but are angels of God, for ever and ever.

"5. And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me, or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power,—then it is not valid, neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world, it cannot be received there, because the angels and the Gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory, for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God.

"6. And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by

the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power, and the keys of this Priesthood; and it shall be said unto them, ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood; and if he abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity, and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the Gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds for ever and ever.

"7. Then shall they be Gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them; then shall they be Gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

"8. Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye abide my law, ye cannot attain to this glory; for strait is the gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there

be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world, neither do ye know me. But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation, that where I am, ye shall be also. This is eternal lives, to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. I am He. Receive ye, therefore, my law. Broad is the gate and wide the way that leadeth to the death, and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law.

"9. Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder, wherein they shed innocent blood—yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.

"10. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world, nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder, wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law, can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord.

"11. I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me, and my Father, before the world was. Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation, and sitteth upon his throne.

"12. Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose loins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph—which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or if ye were to count the sand upon the sea shore, ye could not number them. This promise is yours, also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law are the continuation of the works of my Father wherein he glorifieth Himself. Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law, and ye shall be saved. But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.

"13. God commanded Abraham, and Ṣarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law, and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises. Was Abraham therefore

under condemnation? Verily, I say unto you, *Nay;* for I, the Lord, commanded it. Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless, it was written, thou shalt not kill. Abraham, however, did not refuse, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.

"14. Abraham received concubines, and they bare him children, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law, as Isaac also, and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels, but are Gods. David also received many wives and concubines, as also Solomon and Moses my servants; as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin, save in those things which they received not of me.

"15. David's wives and concubines were given unto him, of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant and others of the Prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me, save in the case of Uriah and his wife, and therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.

"16. I am the Lord thy God, and I gave unto thee, my servant Joseph, an appointment, and restore all things; ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you according to my word. And as ye have asked concerning adultery—verily, verily I say unto you, if a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery, and shall be destroyed. If she be not in the new and everlasting covenant, and she be with another man, she has committed adultery; and if her husband be with another woman, and he was under a vow, he hath broken his vow, and hath committed adultery; and if she hath not committed adultery, but is innocent, and hath not broken her vow, and she knoweth it, and I reveal it unto you, my servant Joseph, then shall you have power, by the power of my Holy Priesthood, to take her, and give her unto him that hath not committed adultery, but hath been faithful, for he shall be made ruler over many; for I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the Priesthood, wherein I restore all things, and make known unto you all things in due time.

"17. And verily, verily I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth, shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name, and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whose soever sins you

remit on earth, shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whose soever sins you retain on earth, shall be retained in heaven.

"18. And again, verily I say, whomsoever you bless, I will bless, and whomsoever you curse, I will curse, saith the Lord; for I, the Lord, am thy God.

"19. And again, verily I say unto you, my servant Joseph, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings, and not cursings, and with my power, saith the Lord, and shall be without condemnation on earth, and in heaven; for I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily, I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father. Behold, I have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices, in obedience to that which I have told you; go, therefore, and I make a way for your escape, as I accepted the offering of Abraham, of his son Isaac.

"20. Verily I say unto you, a commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your wife, whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself, and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham; and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice:

and let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God; for I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph, that he shall be made ruler over many things, for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him.

"21. And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment, she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her, if she abide not in my law; but if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will bless him and multiply him, and give unto him an hundredfold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds. And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she hath trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice.

"22. And again, I say, let not my servant Joseph put

his property out of his hands, lest an enemy come and destroy him; for Satan seeketh to destroy; for I am the Lord thy God, and he is my servant; and behold! and lo, I am with him, as I was with Abraham, thy father, even unto his exaltation and glory.

"23. Now, as touching the law of the Priesthood, there are many things pertaining thereunto. Verily if a man be called of my Father, as was Aaron, by mine own voice, and by the voice of him that sent me, and I have endowed him with the keys of the power of this Priesthood, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word, he will not commit sin, and I will justify him. Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph, for I will justify him, for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands, for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God.

"24. And again, as pertaining to the law of the Priesthood, if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent; and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery, for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else; and if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him, therefore is he justified. But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall

be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world; and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that He may be glorified.

"25. And again, verily, verily I say unto you, if any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my Priesthood as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe, and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God, for I will destroy her: for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law. Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not administer unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor, and he is exempt from the law of Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law, when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife. And now, as pertaining to this law, verily, verily I say unto you I will reveal more unto you hereafter, therefore, let this suffice for the present. Behold! I am Alpha and Omega. Amen."

I shall hope to recur to the subject of these Latter-

Day Saints; it being an exigency of my form of publishing these papers, not only that I should write with a running pen, but that, in point of arrangement, they should sometimes appear to succeed each other in somewhat kaleidoscopic order, or rather, as we used to say in old Academic times, *nullo ordine, sed confusè.*

THE GOSPEL OF HELL FIRE ACCORDING TO MR. VOYSEY.

Mr. Voysey is another of those abnormal clerical existences who, like one or two of those I have already mentioned, is equally well qualified to adorn the heights of Heterodoxy, or to lie in the abysm of Orthodoxy. By his position as a clergyman of the Established Church he may share lot and inheritance in the latter; by his schismatical services at St. George's Hall he is as clearly in the ranks of Heterodoxy, and so I claim him fearlessly as my own. I don't think he would have objected if I had consulted him beforehand.

On a previous occasion, when I visited St. George's Hall for a Sunday service, now some years ago, I was struck by a certain coldness pervading the ritual; and I fancy the impression remained by me, and perhaps prevented my renewing my acquaintance. It seemed to me, I recollect, as though the body and bones of worship were there without the soul. It may be from my more extended acquaintance with Heterodoxy in general and Theism in particular that this no longer strikes me, or, at all events, not in the same degree as it did before. But it is also an

unquestioned fact that the music and other æsthetic adjuncts at St. George's have also greatly improved in the interim.

The service is still singularly like that of the Church of England, as though Mr. Voysey had not been able to shake himself free from his old encumbrances—in fact, it *is* the Church of England service most judiciously abridged, and, of course, with all the Trinitarian passages omitted. One cannot but be struck with the idea how nice it must be to be, like Mr. Voysey, one's own Bishop, Rubrics, Thirty-nine Articles, and all the rest. It is thus he describes the compilation which forms his prayer-book of the present:—

"This Form of Prayer is not compiled with the expectation of its being permanent.

"It is essential to sympathetic interest in liturgical prayers and praises that they should not be inexorably settled as to form and expression.

"At the same time, it is to be hoped, on many grounds, that this Form will receive a fair and patient trial, and that those who may take objection to any portion of it will remember that others may like that very portion best; and that if any number of people join in public worship, they can only do so by making mutual concessions.

"This Prayer Book was compiled under the conviction of the Editor's inability to adopt the old Nonconformist worship, with its long *extempore*

prayer, even had it been preferred by the congregation. He believed however that, as some form must be used, the form most likely to find acceptance would be one which was already partly familiar to English ears, and yet stripped of all that has become obsolete and out of harmony with a pure Theism.

"He commends the 'Revised Prayer Book' to the consideration of those who may be called upon to take an active part in the reformation of the English Church and Liturgy.

"The Psalms are retained, after being relieved of those maledictions and mournful complaints which had only or chiefly a temporary and local value.

"Some expressions have been retained simply for their poetry or quaintness, and others have not been excluded for fear of marring their context. What has been aimed at is to provide a reasonable Service, with the smallest degree of departure from familiar forms, which was necessary in order to exclude what the Editor considered to be erroneous or superstitious.

"The two new Services, of *Duty*, and of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*, have been introduced for occasional use, in place of the old *Litany*, and of the old *Communion Service*. They are at best but experiments in this direction, and though time and custom may make them more acceptable than they can be at first, the Editor hopes that they will be some day replaced by productions far more worthy of their noble purpose."

The congregation, on the morning of my renewed

visit, seemed a sparse one, but was really large; and I could not help feeling the strangeness of the situation in going to church in a private box, since, by the courtesy of Mr. Voysey, I was thus luxuriously provided for. He had begun the service when I got there, reading from a rostrum placed in front of the stage, as at the Sunday afternoon lectures; but a quasi-ecclesiastical appearance was added by a Glastonbury chair in its rear; and the drop-scene was also replaced with a large crimson curtain, partially looped up in the centre, to allow the voices of the choir, who were placed behind, to penetrate into the hall. In place of the "Psalms for the day" they sang the 103rd Psalm only, from a selection at the end of the Service Book, to a florid Anglican chant, the effect of the unseen chorus being almost operatic in character. Then Mr. Voysey, instead of a Lesson from the Old Testament, "or from some other ancient writings," as prescribed in his Office Book, read the following passage from F. W. Newman's "Theism:"—

RIGHTS OF ANIMALS.

How pleasant it is to see beautiful creatures, otherwise wild,
Become tame and trustful to the hand of man,
Or at least not terrified by his near approaches!
As when the gentle fallow-deer loves to be fondled,
And the hare and the pheasant are not scared,
Or the stork calmly builds its nest on the housetops.
The life of such animals may be taken for man's need,
Yet it is not indifferent in what way it be taken;
Whether so as only to cut short the days of the individual,
Or so as also to distress and terrify the living,

Chasing them from pleasant haunts into distant refuges less hospitable,
And filling them with terror of man, their enemy.
The more intelligent the animal the worse the infliction;
For he remembers both the causes of danger and its neighbourhoods,
And by his sagacity shuns new encounter with the more powerful.
Thus the beaver is driven from his rivers and favourite pools,
Thus the gentle seal, massacred in heaps by sailors,
Forsakes milder seas and its well-known creeks,
Plunging into drearier mist and further ice,
Which punish not undeservedly the too relentless persecutor,
Who thought but for momentary gain by promiscuous slaughter,
And slighting all rights of animals, was unwise for his own future.

That all living things have some rights, no one will deny;
For wanton cruelty is universally condemned:
Yet the limits of their rights have been scarcely discussed,
Nor the diverse rights of diverse animals
Under circumstances diverse, such as tame and wild.
The tame creature which receives and gives affection,
Is with most humane persons a sacred life;
Nor will many approve to slaughter a pet lamb
Or a much fondled gazelle, for daintiness and avarice;
Though for any real necessity the same cannot be disapproved.
The creatures that multiply under man's care and protection,
Which in some sense may be said to have bestowed life upon them,
These creatures, if not admitted into personal attachment,
Nor endowed with sagacity to foresee or to remember deaths,
Are slain for man's use without moral mischief;
Even if Brahmins or Vegetarians feebly object.
Not but even here caution may justly be entered
Against *so* inflicting death as to wound those who live.
To kill a calf while the mother will grieve for it,
Does not merely shorten a life, but tortures maternal feeling,
Which exists in the cow less intelligently than in the woman,
Yet not less truly or less unfailingly:
And though man's nobler life is well fed by animal life,
Yet daintiness of appetite, though in a man, is less noble
Than maternal affection, though it be but in a cow:
And a better morality than that hitherto called Christian
Will hereafter enact the limit of our rights over the animal.

In fact, over wild creatures, which man has never protected,

Nor fed, nor in any way reared, we have no direct claim;
For neither strength over weakness, nor cunning over simplicity,
Gives any validity of right, except for protection and government.
But the creatures which exist without mutual affection,
Having neither family life nor maternal sentiment,
Living for themselves alone, grieving for none,
Have not even the rudiments of morality or of moral rights:
And where life is wholly unmoral, we are free to take it.
Thus man captures and devours the fish of seas and rivers,
As innocently as the same fish devour one another,
Violating no tender affection nor engendering moral evil.
Less clear by far is the case with animals intelligent and affectionate,
Which love their own comrades and resent their wrongs:
As the troops of walrus and seal assemble for vengeance,
If but one of their own band has been harmfully assailed,
And mourn over the slaughtered, and piteously remember the place—
Creatures sensible and kind, not less sagacious than dogs,
Curious of man's ways and of the sweet sounds of music,
So that, but for their marine life, sea-dogs would be our faithful friends.
Surely to harass these creatures is not without its evil
In the eye of a great God who inspires their mutual love.
Nor can other destructive commercial hunting be approved,
As where the majestic bison ranges the prairie,
Cut off by wild forest and swamp from inhabited lands;
The hunters, incited by trade, kill the noble game without measure,
Strewing the ground with (it may be) four hundred huge carcases,
And carry away but four hundred wretched *tongues!*
Many such are the enormities where Law cannot reach.

While human tribes shall live on the grounds of the bear and the wolf,
Driven thither by tyrannies, or detained by ignorance
And by bodily habits half assimilated to the brutal,
So long the wild seal must perish for the wild man.
But the times of man's misgovernment are not to be eternal,
Nor can eternal morality be framed out of transitory facts;
And those who have learnt well that the Moral is higher than the Material,
Will not despise tender sentiment though in the bosom of ape or bear.
The Turk, the Arab, the Indian—men individually savage—
Are often taught by religion to revere God's gift of life,
And to abhor destroying life save for security or need.
To enjoy acts of slaughter, and the sport of killing,

Belonged (once upon a time) to none but rude barbarians,
In whom hunting had engenderd a love of mere destruction:
It is reserved for modern times, and pre-eminently for Christians,
That humane and refined men should sport with deeds of blood,
Killing and wounding the timid, the feeble, the beautiful,
Not for food nor even for daintiness, but for the pride of skill.
What tender and thoughtful heart will call such pastime pleasure,
And think without compunction over the lingerings of the wounded?

I had no idea until I came to copy out this extract that it was in any sense rhythmical. Neither Mr. Voysey's recitation nor the subject matter seemed to favour such a supposition. In fact, it was only by the mechanical arrangement of the printing that I discovered it. Mr. Martin Tupper no longer stands alone! "As to the form of work," says Professor Newman himself, "I will only say that (after experiments of a common style) it was adopted for reasons which seemed to me adequate, but which it is unavailing to produce. In a matter of taste those who are not satisfied without argument are seldem convinced by argument."

The Venite followed, beautifully sung as a tenor solo with chorus, and then, in like manner, a Second Lesson was taken from the "Heteropathy" of Miss Frances Power Cobbe.

The Jubilate succeeded the Second Lesson; and then, after the Suffrages which follow the Creed in the Church of England service, and a few collects and prayers, came a singularly beautiful and effective Benediction Service, occupying the position of the

Litany. This is so characteristic as to deserve being transcribed at length:—

¶ *Then shall follow the Service of Benediction.*

¶ *The Minister standing, the People kneeling.*

Minister. Blessed are all they who love the Lord, and who walk in His ways. Blessed are they who keep His commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in His sight.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are they who search diligently for the truth, loving it above all earthly reward, and sacrificing all else that they may faithfully proclaim it.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are they who love mankind, whose lives are spent in doing good, who are active in labour, tender in sympathy, and the well-springs of help and consolation.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the upright and trustworthy, whose promise is never broken, and whose word is sure.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the pure whose hearts shrink from iniquity, in whose lips there is no guile, and to whom all things are pure.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the merciful who remember their own need of mercy; the humble, who judge not harshly their brothers' sin; and the meek, who are slow to take offence.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the patient, long-suffering, and forbearing; and the peacemakers, who by silence or timely speech heal the strifes of men.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the kind, considerate, and generous masters, who take thought for the souls and bodies of those who serve them.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the diligent, faithful, and honest servants, who care more to serve well than to receive much.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the husbands and wives who live together in faithful love, tenderly caring for each other's good.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the fathers and the mothers who rule their households well, and bring up their children in the paths of holiness and peace.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the children who love and obey their parents, and dwell together in unity, learning wisdom and virtue, and growing more truthful, honourable, and pure from day to day.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are all faithful friends who comfort each other in sorrow, rejoice together in prosperity, and whose friendship cannot be shaken by a timely reproof.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are they who, living under the clouds of sorrow or disappointment themselves, are yet sources of comfort to others, and shed peace and joy on all around them.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the honest teachers, who are loyal to truth and duty, and who suffer in mind, body, or estate through their own integrity.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are the faithful guardians of other men's lives, rich or poor, who honour all men, and speak unto others as they would men should speak unto them.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are they who care more for the good of others, and for their own growth in virtue, than for their own pleasure and worldly good, and who value the approval of conscience more than their necessary food.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Minister. Blessed are all they who have learned by the integrity of their own lives that God is just and holy; who have learned by the generosity of their own hearts that God is merciful and loving; and who have learned by their own trustworthiness to commit the well-being of themselves, and of all mankind, without one doubt or fear, into His hands as unto a Faithful Creator.

People. Lord, enrich us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.

¶ *Then the Minister shall say,*

Let us Pray.

O LORD most High, Thou fount and source of every blessing, who hast ever been unto us more than we could desire or deserve, fill our souls with all holy desires, all good counsels, and all pure purposes, that we may outgrow our selfishness, our weakness and our sin, and become more and more what thou dost wish us to be. So cleanse our inmost hearts that we may forget every thought of our own pleasure in desiring and striving only to do Thy blessed will and to give peace and comfort to each other. May we hunger and thirst after righteousness, and leave every issue of good and ill fortune, of health and disease, of life and death, now and evermore, in Thy most loving hands. Amen.

¶ *Then shall follow the Hymn,*

Father! whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy Sovereign will denies,
Accepted at Thy throne of Grace
Let this petition rise.

Give me a calm and thankful heart
From every murmur free;
The blessings of Thy Grace impart,
That I may live to Thee.

Let the sweet hope that I am Thine
My life, my death attend;
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end. Amen.

¶ *Then the Minister shall say,*

The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow therewith. Thou, oh Father, wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.

People. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord alone is everlasting strength. Amen.

And the whole service concluded with the following Hymn of Praise, taken from the Epilogus of F. W. Newman's "Theism:"—

We praise thee in thy power, O God!
We praise thee in thy sanctity.
We praise thee who reignest in the furthest heavens,
We praise thee who dwellest in our inmost souls,
  Our Lord and hidden comforter.
No voice can duly proclaim thy greatness,
No heart can comprehend thy goodness,
O thou Father of all our spirits.
The longings of the spirit are inexhaustible:
Only thou canst fill the heart.
When it is empty and aching for thee,
Hungering and thirsting for thy righteousness,
Thou visitest it with peace unspeakable.
With thee there is no misery to the distressed;
But sorrow is hallowed and pain is sweetened,
And hardship is assuaged, and fear is calmed.
For, thine own nature is blessedness,
And thou makest thy worshippers blessed.
  Yea, blessed is thy presence, O Lord most Holy!
Blessed is it to dwell with thee and to know thee,
To rest on thee and to serve thee.
Blessed shall the nations be when thy glory is recognised,
When all who love thee unite to succour and raise the weak.
Strengthen us in life and death, in this, and in every life,
To be thine in heart, as we are thine in right;
To obey cheerfully, to strive loyally,
To suffer meekly, to enjoy thankfully,

So shall we love thee while we live, and partake of thy joy,
And triumph over sorrow, and fulfil thy work,
And be numbered with thy saints, and die on thy bosom.

The sermon which succeeded was rather an unfortunate one. I had lighted upon the concluding discourse of a series on "Recreation," which was valuable only as an evidence of the bearing of Theism on social questions. In a previous discourse of the series, wherein I was obliged to post myself up, I found the following "canons" of recreation laid down:—

"And this brings us to the enunciation of those principles which ought to guide us in the matter of recreation.

"1. It must be *bonâ fide*, necessary, and beneficial. A man has no right to play till moderately wearied by wholesome work.

"2. It must be really amusing and pleasurable to all parties joining in it. It must not be toil in disguise. It must enliven and refresh, and certainly not be a bore.

"3. It must, whenever possible, be a participated and not a solitary pleasure. It must, on no account, infringe on the happiness or rights of others.

"4. It must tend to elevate, and not to degrade character, to refine the feelings and tastes, and not to deepen their coarseness. Hence,

"5. It must not in any degree tend to indecency or unchastity; nor to ill-temper and strife.

"6. It must not involve the least degree of cruelty to man or beast.

"7. It must not degenerate from being a wholesome restorer of jaded faculties into a vicious stimulant of any of the passions—gambling and revelry are illustrations of this degeneration.

"8. It must ever be regulated by temperance. Too much play is as bad as too much sleep, and worse than too much work.

"9. It must be regulated by a due regard to the circumstances in which it is to be enjoyed. If it necessarily leads into bad company, or renders needful any relaxation of the rules of strict honour, or purity, or goodwill, then it is dangerous and pernicious.

"10. It must be selected with a due regard to individual requirements, and not forced upon any person by public or social pressure against his will. (I refer here more particularly to the tyranny exercised in public schools by the boys over each other in the matter of joining in games.)"

Now here are ten canons or principles which I believe many persons will approve as rules for our guidance in the matter of play. Without doubt, you will all be able to think of some other which I have forgotten, and which I shall be very thankful to be reminded of. At all events, for the present, we have enough to work upon, and indeed more than we shall have time to attend to this morning.

"Applying these principles to some of our popular amusements, we discover at once their faults and their merits."

Perhaps the most important of such "applications" was that affecting the drama, the comparison of theatre-going with church-going being likely, I fancy, to make Mr. Voysey a very popular "director" with Young England:—

"We will begin with the theatres, as being by far the most popular and most delightful of all our places of public amusement. We can see almost at a glance that some theatrical performances do, and some do not, stand the test which I would apply to them. Those which do are to some persons the most perfect form of recreation that can be devised as a relief after overwork of the brain. They are *per se* amusing or interesting, and pleasurable. When they are moderately long they are absolutely refreshing.

"They are eminently social, and though most of the large audiences are composed mostly of persons utterly unknown to each other, their pleasure is considerably heightened by unspoken sympathy, and by the possibility of joining together in grateful plaudits.

"Moreover, many plays have a directly refining influence on the character and tastes, conveying moral truths home to the hearts of the spectators in such a

manner as to make a lasting beneficial impression. Those plays of which I speak are pre-eminently chaste to the eye and to the ear, and involve no painful efforts on the part of the actors. They soothe and do not stimulate; they may be frequented in the best possible company, and the practice of attending them involves no more sacrifice of honour, purity, or goodwill, than going to church—in fact, the latter is sometimes open to this objection.

"In the last place, applying our 10th canon, attendance at a theatre is not compulsory, not so needful as a passport into good society as attendance at a place of worship."

The sermon which I heard on the occasion I now refer to was of the same character; and, like the lessons which had preceded it, might have been designed to lead up to an impending collection on behalf of the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Animals. Taking as his text Proverbs xii. 10, Mr. Voysey assumed the cudgels for game and fish, waxing very wroth with Canon Kingsley, who had included among the signs of muscular Christianity a proclivity for fox-hunting. He quoted, though without quite endorsing, St. Jerome's doubt as to whether a sportsman could be canonized into a Saint. Then he passed on to athletic sports; but reserved all his vials of wrath for croquet—poor innocent curate-beloved croquet! It was, he said, a synonym for "talking

small nothings;" and, like the old lady at Brother Stiggins's meeting, when the composition of "dog's-nose" was publicly stated, I felt inclined to respond, "So it is." Cards and billiards, like theatres, were highly approved of; and bowls and skittles looked upon as marking an epoch—a sort of *aurum priscum*—from which we English of the present day had degenerated. Those games in which men and women could join were said to be the best. A smart young lady who was with me in my box suggested kiss-in-the-ring, but Mr. Voysey leaned to shuttlecock.

The sermon was curious as an instance of the bearing of Pure Theism on such minutiæ as shuttlecock to wit, but scarcely what I sought for my purpose; a more satisfactory one being that whose title I have chosen for the heading of my chapter. Mr. Voysey is greatest when he is destructive; and I venture to think the "Gospel of Hell Fire" among his happiest efforts in that direction. The very title is an invention, and should have been patented.

"*And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, neither any that answered.*"—1 Kings xviii. 26.

"There are some points of resemblance between our own times and those of Israel at the crisis spoken of in my text. Israel was then beginning to emerge

from the pagan idolatry into which the nation had sunk through contact with the aborigines of Canaan. Elijah, the prophet, was one of the most prominent agents by which the new deliverance was being effected. He brought matters to a crisis by an appeal to the people, and a challenge to the priests of Baal, 'If the Lord be God, follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him.' He would permit of no compromise. He forced the priests into an ordeal which should finally determine the claims of the rival Deities. Without committing ourselves to the acceptance of the miraculous part of the story, we can well believe that by some means which we should no longer deem legitimate, he contrived some startling effects which influenced the credulous and childish crowds around him to believe that the truth was on his side. The priests of Baal, honest enough, as their conduct proved, and steadfastly believing in the power of their god, accepted the conditions of the ordeal, and sacrificed, and waited, and prayed, and prayed, and waited for the fire from heaven, which was to be the true token. But all in vain—from morning till noon—from noon till the evening shades began to fall, their piteous cry rose to the silent sky, 'O Baal, hear us, O Baal, hear us.' 'But there was no voice, nor any that answered.' As their hope waned, and their feverish excitement waxed hotter, their devotion led them into the wildest acts of self-mutilation. Thinking their god was not satisfied with the blood of the

slaughtered bullock, they cut themselves with knives and lancets till their own blood gushed out in supplicating streams. But all in vain. The air is now rent with the despairing cry, echoed by a hundred frantic voices, 'O Baal, hear us;' and as the sun goes down, the agonizing pause is once more made, but nothing comes to break that awful stillness. 'There was no voice, neither any that answered.'

"A similar crisis in the history of orthodoxy is being enacted before us to-day. The old religion is passing away. Its corruptions have begun at last to yield under the pressure of a thousand modern Elijahs. Nobler, purer ideas of God are beginning to take root; true faith in Him and in all His dealings is beginning to supersede that awful fear of Him which led men to take refuge from Him in the arms of a deified man. Moreover, some intrepid opponents of the old religion have challenged its champions to trial by ordeal—the ordeal of prayer for visible temporal benefit, and that challenge has been wisely declined. But they have practically accepted an ordeal—not quite so easy of scrutiny perhaps, but quite as likely to act as a test as the intercessory prayer for a ward in a hospital. The champions of orthodoxy have betaken themselves to a method of proving the truth of their religion quite as hopeless as that accepted by the priests of Baal. They have resolved to invoke their God on behalf of Christian missions; and speaking as it were on Elijah's side,

we are quite content to accept the results. If by their prayers they can succeed in converting, say, one-tenth of the population of India or of the Buddhist races in the far East, we will own that there is something vital and strong in their belief. We will not admit that it is any the more true, because the spread of opinions is no criterion of their truth or falseness, but we will admit that their religion is not dead, and that there may be some efficacy in their intercessory prayers.

"The experiment was originated last year, and although as yet no accounts have reached us of a single additional convert in consequence, yet we do hear it boasted that the Missionary Funds were certainly augmented by the operation. It is possible that some of the orthodox may be short-sighted enough to think that this is quite sufficient; that so long as there is abundance of money the work of conversion is of a merely secondary importance. But the majority of good and earnest people whose hearts are set upon making good Christians out of all the idolaters under the sun, will not long be content with a large array of annual subscriptions, unless it be speedily followed up by glowing accounts of large harvests of souls. Indeed, nothing less than this will meet the question which the ordeal is intended to settle. We know very well that if a number of people agree to pray in concert on a given day for a particular object, and if, moreover, the preachers all

follow up the prayers by earnest exhortations to the people to act as well as to pray—to put their own shoulders to the wheel—we know for certain that many of those people will of necessity be impelled to do something towards that object. Some will give their money more freely, and some will surrender themselves, their whole lives, to the work. This is done every day in all kinds of enterprise, without a word of prayer to God to prosper the undertaking. It is perfectly explicable on natural grounds. Once get persons to interest themselves in anything, and the rest does itself. How much more easy is it then to gain the interests of religious persons on behalf of missionary enterprise! The subject is already of paramount importance. Those who have been themselves converted are impressed with the awful danger from which they have made their escape, and are humanely desirous to save the perishing souls of their brethren. Add to this, the influence of combined effort, the stimulating power of sensationalism, and an extra fold of solemnity, and you have an agency for immensely augmenting the funds of a Missionary Society, and of gaining missionary recruits.

"It does not follow, however, that much money and many men will do the work of conversion. Conversion is a matter which has even more to do with the subject of it than with the agencies brought to bear upon him. All will depend on his own willingness to be

converted. And that again will depend on the amount of inducement which can be brought to bear upon his will through his mind. If he sees that he will be the gainer by the exchange of his ancestral for a foreign creed; or if he can be persuaded that the foreign creed possesses a valuable truth which is wanting from his own, or is free from those errors which he has already detected and from which he recoils, then he may be willing to take the creed of the missionary into consideration. He may possibly be converted; but you cannot get an intelligent and genuine change of religious belief without these conditions. No prayer to the God of Christianity or to Baal will convert a man from a better to a worse creed, or from the creed of his forefathers to the creed of his conquerors, if it seem to him no better than his own.

"Now in many fields of missionary enterprise it is found by experience that the people whom the Christians seek to convert already hold a faith of their own quite as good as Christianity, and in some respects superior to it. At all events, the so-called 'Heathen' think so, and that is an insuperable objection to their conversion. We have tried long enough in India—150 years—to discover our utter incompetence to force Christianity upon the 110,000,000 of our Hindoo fellow-subjects. We have tried long enough, though not so long, among the Buddhists of China and Thibet, and with the same miserable result. Certain tribes of North American

Indians, believing in the Great Spirit, and trusting in His eternal friendship, would have nought to do with the doctrines of Christianity, which appeared to them quite as derogatory to the honour of God as they seem to us. On many sides, though certainly not on all, Christianity has been rejected on account of the inherent falsehoods and horrors which are taught in its name; and we venture to say that, with such doctrines on its banner, Christianity will never succeed, and never ought to succeed. It is a credit and glory to humanity that even its uncivilized and semi-barbarous races have rejected it as unworthy of a God, and immoral in its influence upon man.

"For just remember what this Gospel is which the Christian missionaries too often present to the so-called heathen. It is not only the story of a Saviour's love, of a God dying to rescue the children of His heart, of a human life on earth illumined by Divine radiance from within, of a cross on which were outstretched the arms of a world-wide sympathy, of a message of full and free pardon for the past, of a promise abounding in all hope for the future. It is not only this: for this, though it has its false side, is yet lovely and purifying, and must not be trailed in the gutter of that contempt and loathing which is the fit receptacle for the doctrines of devils which are mixed up with it. No, indeed, were it only these glad tidings which the missionary bears across the seas, even we might wish him 'God speed,' and say, 'the Lord prosper your

handiwork.' But the Gospel, such as it is preached, both in far-off lands and in the mass of churches, in the very heart and centre of civilization, such as is this day being made use of to stir up the flagging zeal of the elder, and to excite the spiritual fervour of the younger section of Christian congregations, is a Gospel of fear, and not a Gospel of Love; a Gospel not of hope, but of despair; not of salvation, but of damnation. Behind the Cross of Calvary, out of the thick darkness there looms the dread image of one who is man's natural foe; whom no one dare approach in his naked weakness and with unshielded breast. The Great Supreme, in bitter irony called 'Father of Jesus and of men,' is drawn in outlines so ghastly, and painted in colours so lurid, that the soul cannot look on that face and live. For it is a cardinal doctrine—the one, indeed, upon which the whole Christian scheme of salvation stands, and without which it falls to the ground—that Almighty God is cruel beyond all human language and thought; that no human heart in its bitterest paroxysms of revenge ever invented, no savage skill ever put in practice, the millionth part of that cruelty which they say is part of God's honour and glory. Frightful, indeed, have been the acts of violence and slow torture inflicted by men upon each other when frenzied by a sense of wrong or by religious zeal. But were all these crimes heaped together upon one head, and that one guiltiest and cruellest of mortals, to multiply his crimes through a

thousand lives, it would be but a drop in the ocean of the cruelty and injustice ascribed by the Christians to their supreme God.

"Baal, indeed, or Moloch? These were angels of pity and compassion by the side of the God of Tophet. Human sacrifices might load their altars, the flesh of young men and maidens might writhe in the withering, piercing flame, to gloat their nostrils with the noisome incense. They were loving, compassionate, and tender by the side of Him from whose eternal wrath and burning fiery vengeance we are bidden to flee to the cross of Christ.

"Is it all over at last? Has the horrid nightmare passed away? Is that Almighty Fiend at length hurled from his throne into his own abyss? Ah, my friends, we wish we could believe it; would to God that we could be quite sure that not a single soul this day in our happy land were being writhed and tortured by this ghastly fear! But while we speak strenuous efforts are being made in many of our churches to kindle afresh this burning fear of hell fire. They have tried all sorts of ways in vain; the only means of a revival in religion is to make men and women tremble. 'Flee from the wrath to come' is the theme of thousands of awakening sermons; and, although many are too humane to proclaim the fundamental doctrine in all its grossness, and others are too devout to let their minds consciously attribute everlasting torture to the hands of their God; yet it

is understood up and down the land, by every man, woman, and child, that that most awful doctrine is not only true, but is the reason why Jesus came to save them, and that endless woe must be the fate of all who have no share in his merits and death. Only last week one of these revival preachers began an agonizing discourse by screaming out to the congregation, 'Are you all saved? Are you all saved?' It would be idle to blink the facts, so patent as they are. The Alpha and Omega of orthodox religion is fear of hell fire. It is the masterpiece of superstition, the trumpet-blast which rouses millions of slumbering souls to thoughts of a coming judgment. Even when not openly proclaimed, it is alluded to as one of the unquestioned and unquestionable canons of revealed truth. And so long as men and women are slaves to this insane terror their minds are not in a condition to reason calmly upon any matter, much less to exercise any independent thought on the possibilities of the unseen world, or of their proper duties in the present. Indeed, the wonder is that, while the influence of such fear lasts, the subject of it should be otherwise than mad.

"Now, if it be to that awful fiend that the churches are all praying to help them to convert the heathen, we may take up the scornful language of Elijah, and mock them in their despair—'Cry aloud, for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must

be awaked.' Cry aloud, and if your prayers will not avail, go into your wretched cells and mortify yourselves with the sternest asceticism. Cut off one by one all the charms of life, and bare your back and your soul to those thongs which are kept for the brute and the savage. From morn till noon, and noon till evening, and many a long cold hour before the break of day, rouse yourselves to your prayers; for all your wailings and lamentations, there shall be no voice, neither any to answer you. There is no such God in whom you believe. There is no almighty devil whom you think supreme; and never, while time endures, while human lips can utter a cry, or human hands can gash the throbbing veins, never shall you find answer from Heaven or from Hell. If all your work be to carry the tidings of man's great and inconceivable woe, to add to the perplexities and sorrows of pain-stricken lives, by the vision of that unquenchable furnace; to darken, blacken, and render hideous beyond all human thought and language, the face of God already clouded over by human ignorance and fear; if that be all your missionary aim, we need not waste our breath in malediction over it, or in wishing it may come to an untimely end. There is no longer room for it in this God-shining world of ours. The earth will cast it from her like a poisonous vapour, the sea will refuse to carry its messengers on her heaving breast, the rocks and hills will give the lie to

your lips, the first moment you dare open them in your blasphemy. Take it to the benighted heathen, to the cannibal, and to the kingdom of Dahomey, and even there fierce savages will turn from it with loathing and horror, and refuse to believe in a cruelty so infinite, so pitiless.

"Would you get men to listen to you, you must encourage not discourage them; you must preach justice on God's part, as well as justice between man and man. You must alter the very basis of your religion, and rear a more enlightened creed upon your new basis. You must 'speak good of God's name,' or the hearts which He has made will either laugh you to scorn or thrust you rudely from your pulpits.

"Your very Christ, in whose name you boast, and without whose protection you dare not even think of your Maker, will share the ignominy which your doctrine of Hell has brought upon the holy names of God and religion. You are playing a most perilous game of making threats in Christ's name, and inflaming your young converts with terror by visions of the 'Wrath of the Lamb.' Soon the night will be spent and the day will dawn, and the hearts which you might have won as votaries of the Nazarene, will turn from him and from his cruel threats of vengeance with as much repugnance and shame as they will turn from you.

"Be warned in time. Your prayers are all vain, for there is no one in earth or Heaven like him on whom you call. Your revival of religion is all superficial, for the fear which you have excited is only like a troubled dream, which the beams of daybreak will dispel. Your missionary zeal is labour lost, for you might as well try to convert a Caucasian into an anthropoidal ape as to persuade one who trusts in God's goodness to believe in your doctrine of everlasting Hell.

"O Missionaries, if you would earn the high praise of the Hebrew prophet, take with you words of hope and consolation. Let your mouth be filled with God's praise, and utter forth every promise of good and blessedness which loving hearts desire for their weak and erring brethren. Tell them of that inexhaustible loving-kindness which burns up all our sin and transforms the sinner into the saint, which smites only to bless, binds up every broken heart and wipes away every tear. Tell them that 'God is Love,' and 'His mercy endureth for ever,' and your glad voices shall be welcomed, and your footsteps cheered all along the pathway of life by those words of gratitude and joy, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring us the glad tidings of the Gospel of peace.'"

As a sort of pendent to this sermon, Mr. Voysey preached on a subsequent Sunday upon "The Gospel

of Hope." The two discourses together give a fair sample of his teaching, both negative and positive. The following is the close of the latter sermon :—

"After being steeped so long in false notions of Heaven and Hell, we can scarcely wonder that some persons do not instinctively understand what we mean by final good. Ths old erroneous sentiment still clings to their minds, and colours their conception of what we mean by human destiny. Their idea of 'all things coming right at last,' is mixed up with two entirely false ideas, one is that 'coming right' means exclusively 'happiness,' a sense of pleasure, and the other false idea is that things can ever 'come right' at all without being made right—yes, made right mainly by ourselves. Now, the correction of one of these errors will go far to correct the other also.

"In looking forward to final good for all, the notion of happiness or sense of pleasure is not the thing present to our minds. It may be, and very likely is, inseparable from final good; but that is not the thing on which our hearts are set, and which, as we believe, God has promised to us through the yearnings of our souls. What we look forward to is goodness of soul—being made perfect, so that in whatever state we may find ourselves, we may be all that a perfectly righteous God desires us to be, and therefore in every sense an unqualified blessing to every being, human or otherwise, within reach of our conduct and

influence. Just as now the prayer of a wise and honest soul is not for mere enjoyment, not for any increase of his personal comfort, nor for any decrease of his personal trials and troubles, but for such improvement of his own character and conduct as shall make him more useful and kind to his fellow-men; so our aspirations, if they are manly and sound will not be for what are popularly called the 'joys of Heaven,' but for righteousness and true holiness, for perfect ability to love and do the perfect will of God. And this is what we believe to be the final destiny of every moral being in the universe. Whether the happiness and fulness of joy will come with it, is not only no business of ours, but having an eye to such recompense will defeat itself, will keep back one stain on the purity of soul which God would fain see without spot or blemish or any such thing. Hence it is easy to see what 'coming right at the last' really means. Nothing does or can ever 'come right' in this region of moral progress. Everything has to be put right and made right, and if not done here, it must be done hereafter. Not done for us, but done by us. God will no more help us to do what he has ordered us to do for ourselves, than He will work any miracle to the subversion of His Laws.

"Our gospel of boundless hope might turn our heads if it meant that we have a right to expect to take heaven at a bound, and to leap into all felicity without the toil and difficulty of gradual progress.

But it means no such thing, but the very reverse of this. It has one and only one promise, 'You shall succeed if you try.' Its one encouragement is 'Not a single moral effort shall be lost.' Its most powerful incentive to renewed moral effort is 'God has made you for this destiny.' You *must* become good. It is of no use your trying to evade it. It is for you only to determine how long the process shall be. You can hasten or delay it at your pleasure or at your peril. But you will be won over to goodness at last. The end is inevitable. You cannot fight against your destiny, so the sooner you yield to holy influences the better. You will have no peace until you do. You may make your path as devious, as thorny, as rugged as you choose. Its length and its hardships are all your own. As you sow, so you shall reap. Try your own way—seek only your own pleasure—resist the law of human life which commands you to live for others, and you will find yourself defeated at every turn. You will curse your own folly for your self-will. Your own gratification will become ashes in the devouring. Your pursuit of your own pleasure even in the most refined occupations, if that pleasure be all you pursue, will mock you with its emptiness and its brevity. For every defeat of the moral law, it will come back upon you with redoubled severity. 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' 'The wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, There is no peace, saith

my God, unto the wicked.' Now we regard all this as part of the Divine order, the Providence of God, of which I spoke last Sunday.

"Most repugnant is it to my own feelings ever to descend into the old language of threatening, which disfigured the obnoxious creed of my youth. And I cannot bear to be bordering upon it now; but if the plain question is put to me 'What does it matter how we live if everything must come right in the end?' I must at once stoop from the serene calm of a nobler altitude and say, If you think it does not matter, try it. Try to live the life of an immoral animal, and do it at your peril. You will only multiply your sorrows and make your way back again up to the light of human goodness inexpressibly harder and longer. You will only be gathering round you the stings of self-reproach, and piling fuel upon fuel for your own burning. The hell of the Christians may be as untrue as it is coarse and blasphemous. But think not that because we have swept away that hideous dream, there is no torment of soul for those who break God's laws. There is anguish left in the reality of human experience quite enough to scare you from presumptuous sin, and to keep you from playing with such dangerous tools.

"We believe and we repeat without wearying, our delight in a God of infinite mercy. But we believe that His mercy shines brightest in His meting out to every transgression its exact penalty, in passing by no

offences which his chastisement can correct. 'Thou Lord art merciful,' cried the Psalmist—not for letting us off, not for punishing the innocent instead of us—but merciful 'because thou rewardest every man according to his work.' Try to escape that if you can; you might as well try to live in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, or make your home in the depths of the sea. 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

"The notion then of things 'coming right' at the last is a fallacy. Once more I repeat they can only be made right by each man's own moral exertion. Supposing it to be true that such a glorious destiny is before us as that all men shall come at length to perfect holiness, instead of being turned into an encouragement to sin, it seems to make the cause of sin more hopeless than ever. It builds up a wall in that direction through which no human being can pass. He must retrace his steps. He must find the narrow way that leadeth unto life. Under the light of this Gospel of Hope, sin is visited with prompt and speedy retribution, instead of being allowed to go on with impunity, accumulating into a heavy debt, which only makes men more reckless.

"Under the old gospel a man might sin as he pleased, so long as he believed in the atoning blood at the last; and a capital chance they all had, for the instances of sudden death are very rare; and he must be a poor creature indeed who cannot get absolution

on such easy terms. But under the new gospel of final good for all, no one can ever escape the just consequences of sin, and perhaps, when we know more of its baneful effects, our sorrow will be more acute, on account of the injury inflicted by it on others. No one can ever hide himself from the accusing conscience, or deliver him from the dread spectre of remorse. If it be a question of moral influence, which is the more potent, the doctrine of final good, or the dogma of damnation ? there can be no question that the former, rightly understood, is unspeakably the more powerful, as it is unquestionably the more reasonable.

" Hell fire only exercised a deterrent effect on those who were in no danger of it, while it did not touch in the slightest degree the hearts of those who, according to theory, were going straight into it.

" The doctrine of Hope at least warns quite as much as it encourages, and promises only what we must ourselves achieve.

" I know some people brought up under the old hope and expectation, the old longing for perfect bliss on the other side of life's last fence, who cannot take kindly to this idea of *growing* good, of getting only a little better and better as the ages roll away; and who turn from it with a sigh of weariness, dreading the renewal of moral conflict in the world to come. To them I have a word of peace; we do not know any details of that which lies beyond the grave. We have no right to speak in God's name about it at all, except

only to express our fervent hope that this life is not our end, and that a future lies before each one of us for the perfection, or immortal progress, of our nature. We base this hope on our idea of God with whose perfection this future for man seems absolutely bound up. But we know not how long or how short the journey upwards may be, or what fuller knowledge awaits our exit from the earth, to make us cheerfully acquiesce in all that lies before us. Your instinct for repose may be just as true as our forecast of new toil and new conflict. Our lots may be different. God is not tied and bound by any of our speculations and fancied schemes. Do not spoil the little remnant of earthly life by forebodings of future trouble which may never come. God's will is sure to be the best for us, and if we cultivate contentment here in this first scene of our discipline, we shall be better fitted for the unknown cares and trials of the next.

"Finally, is there not something grand in the conception of human destiny which we advocate, inasmuch as it reconciles the Doctrine of Necessity with that of Freewill? God has made man sufficiently free to make it only a question of time with him when he will accomplish his own destiny; and yet man's nature is so constituted that of necessity he will come at last, of his own free will, to work out the Divine decrees.

"I cannot leave the subject of this discourse without once more deprecating the low ground of rewards and punishments which might have suited a lower stage

of mankind than that we have reached. Even if there were no God, no destiny for man hereafter, surely it still matters very much what we do and how we live. It may matter by comparison little to ourselves; but much—who shall say how much?—to those around us, and who are dependent on our hearts and lives for those crumbs of affection and sympathy which may fall from our burdened tables. My young friend, never mind about your destiny and things coming right. But if you have not a heart of stone, do care very much about your life, your conduct, your principles, your habits, and above all your motives, for your father's and mother's sake, for your brother's and sister's sake, for the sake of your betrothed, your young wife, or for your one cherished friend. Then if there be a God in Heaven, it will please Him the more to see you live righteously and soberly, out of love to your fellow-men, than if you did it out of love to Himself, or through hope of joys to come. Thank God, whatever becomes of Christianity, or even of our own glorious Faith and Hope, nothing can shake the everlasting foundations on which true virtue is built! We cannot unmake the heart of man, turn back the ceaseless flow of human progress, or quench for ever the immortal flame of Human Love."

MODERATE UNITARIANISM.

The old Court suburb of Kensington, as one of the wealthiest around London, naturally attracts to itself as a nucleus representatives of the different faiths of the metropolis. In the small space occupied by the Mall we have now no less than three places of worship. Dr. Bayley's Swedenborgian chapel stands as the embodiment of Modern Mysticism. The iron church at the bottom, in the Vicarage gardens, whose presiding genius is Archdeacon Sinclair, represents, of course, the very quintessence of Orthodoxy; and so far matters might have appeared to be evenly balanced, when lo! the Little Church in the Mall, like Aladdin's palace, suddenly appears on the scene to throw matters into confusion again; since it being occupied by the Unitarians, Heterodoxy stands in the proportion of two to one—unless, indeed, a dignitary of Archidiaconal functions be equivalent to a brace of ordinary heretics. Perhaps on none save severely etymological grounds would the occupants of this Little Church in the Mall, as it has got to be called, claim notice in a work on Heterodox London. Between themselves and some of our more advanced clergy in the Establishment there is little difference,

after all, and the very quiet way in which it dropped down in our midst was scarcely like the advent of a complete stranger.

One day there seemed a patch of waste ground in the Mall, and the next, or a very few days after, lo! a convenient iron church. But this was not all. A very attractive series of lectures was advertised for Sunday evenings by the Rev. Charles Howe, and from time to time I projected a visit, but my intention was not carried out until the Sunday when he preached the concluding sermon of the series on the very pertinent subject "A Vindication of Broad Christianity." The title must be accepted with reservation. Generally speaking, when one mentions Broad Church it is intended to designate one of the three sections into which the Establishment is broken up. The Church in the Mall, however, is none such, but belongs to what I should term Moderate Unitarians.

I hear that the present iron church has been provided for Unitarian worship through the zeal and liberality of a family well known in this city, and is only intended to be temporary. This congregation, which formerly worshipped in the Victoria Hall, Archer Street, has increased under the present minister, and has lately received the adhesion of many influential residents in the West. A Sunday school has been begun, and I learn that it is intended, at no very distant date, to build a more imposing structure on the land now partly occupied by the iron church.

I found that the morning services are liturgical, the prayer book being the "Ten Services" used by the Little Portland congregation, which has been adopted in many Unitarian churches. These services are taken in turn in the morning, but the old free Presbyterian worship is retained in the evening.

The devotional part of the service at which I was present that Sunday evening was simplicity itself, and really contained no element which prominently brought forward the distinctive tenets of the Unitarians. I notice this to be a very distinguishing feature of that body at the present moment—the desire to merge rather than parade differences. The Free Christian Church is a very common self-chosen appellation in that persuasion.

First of all we sang a hymn from the voluminous collection of the Rev. James Martineau. Then there was a brief extempore prayer, in which the minister took occasion to express his sense of thankfulness that his people prayed for themselves, instead of having some one else to pray for them. Then a lesson was read from Jeremiah iii. 12 to iv. 2; two Psalms were chanted from a pointed Psalter, with sweet harmonium accompaniment; and then a second lesson read from Acts x. Another hymn and another extempore prayer of greater length followed, concluding with the Lord's Prayer by the minister and congregation; after which came the sermon, succeeded by a third prayer, and the benediction.

The sermon—which I append verbatim—will serve as an admirable exponent of the views of the congregation worshipping in the Little Church in the Mall.

"'*Then Peter opened his mouth and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.*' — 10th chap. Acts, 34, 35.

"The short sermon whence the text is taken," said Mr. Howe, "contains an epitome of the gospel as taught by the Apostle Peter. It is worthy of remark that in it no assertion is made of the deity of Jesus Christ, no mention of the vicarious atonement as preached in this day, of election, or imputed righteousness, and other doctrines which many tell us are the essentials of Christianity. This first preacher of the new religion, who had been taught by the Master's own lips, did not inform Cornelius and his assembled kinsmen that what they had to do was to believe in a crucified Creator, with the alternative of eternal suffering. Peter simply announces Jesus of Nazareth as a heaven-sent teacher to both Jews and Gentiles, who proved his credentials by his divine works, suffered, and rose again; that God will judge the world by him, or, according to the righteous commands which Jesus promulgated, and give remission of sins to all who, accepting him as their master, frame their lives

according to his life and precepts. Any who accepted this plain exposition of Christianity were baptized, and immediately admitted into the new-born church, while the manifestation of God's own spirit in those who believed, ratified the outward rite. Are not all who desire to live and die by this plain confession of faith Christ's also? And who is justified in denying us the right to be called after his name?

"In concluding this course of lectures, which I trust has not been altogether ineffectual in dispelling some of the misapprehensions that exist with respect to the religious body in which I am permitted to minister, I venture to hope you will be able to bear me witness that throughout these discourses no hard or bitter words have fallen from this pulpit concerning those who do not understand the Bible as we do. In the interests of truth, as I have been able to perceive it, I have had to expose many errors; and especially I have denounced a narrow intolerant religious spirit, which I believe all Christian men should combine to stamp out, as we would crush a venomous reptile which had crept into our house, to the danger of life itself; or as a man would extinguish a smouldering fire, that threatens to burn down the home which shelters him. This spirit is so strong and terrible that, as history constantly informs us, it can drive out of a man's heart every sentiment of pity. Though he knows it not, the persecutor is in a more wretched case than his victim. Bigotry will make men fero-

cious who are naturally humane, and change a lamb-like spirit into that of a sanguinary tiger. Society has been compelled by wise laws, to hang as it were fetters of brass upon this spirit; and it is now so manacled that it can for the most part only scream and gibber at those who pass on the road to heaven without pronouncing its shibboleth.

I am not unmindful that it is far from easy to sustain that energy with which we ought to put forth the truth, in perfect union with the highest Christian grace of charity; but in defending his individual convictions I may assume that you have never heard a Unitarian speak of the members of other sects as 'lost souls,' by reason of the creed they sincerely held. No such thought can ever be conceived, much less spoken by a Unitarian. We do not affirm that it is of no importance what a man believes; else why have we withdrawn ourselves from other religious bodies. We know that a man's creed must have an influence on his life. But that is very different from holding that another cannot be saved unless he accepts our creed.

"I read in a pamphlet circulated in a district where Unitarianism had taken root, and was spreading, of 'the false and fatal charity of Unitarians.'

"How strange these words sound in my ears as I repeat them! Were a man to write about false and fatal Christliness it would be equally intelligible. Is not charity the very front and crown of all the

Christian virtues? Faith is to be lost in open vision, hope to be swallowed up in blissful realization, but charity is the very breath of the glorified above.

> She,
> Triumphant sister, greatest of the three,
> Shall stand before the host of heaven confessed,
> For ever blessing, and for ever blessed.

The professors of a Broad Christianity have always stood in the van of those who have fought in the cause of education. There was a time when education was thought to mean revolution, and the dissolution of those ties which thus far have held society together. But, even then, those who held our theology never spoke with a faltering tongue in favour of the instruction of the masses, but laboured with zest to bring about a national system of education which should penetrate into every village and hamlet, and give to every child born on British soil the teaching which shall cause it to respect its obligations to God and man. Some of the most eloquent advocates of freedom, religious, political, and commercial; men who dealt heavy blows at slavery; great lights of literature; philanthropists and social reformers—have professed a phase of Christianity virtually the same as that which is dear to us. Surely, if a man finds himself holding a religious belief akin to that defended by Milton, Locke, and Isaac Newton, he need not be ashamed to vindicate it. It is a faith that works; and if even it does not in any individual, no imputation is to be cast upon a Broad Christianity, which in numberless cases

has ennobled and beautified life, and afforded the most precious consolations in the hour of death.

"Not long ago it was said by a controversialist, "That Unitarians die tranquilly is no proof that their opinions are right.' Certainly not, but it is at least some evidence that they have been sincere. Conscious of great frailty, we might indeed tremble to fall into the hands of the God of Orthodoxy, but we do not shrink from a most loving and merciful Father.

"What can any religion do for a man at last more than that which we profess. With the assured hope of an immortal existence, the sincere professor of a Broad Christianity finds the religion that has always been his joy and consolation in life, does not fail him in the article of death. He has used the powers which God gave him to discover what ought to be believed; he has sought God and the truth both in and around him; at the shrine of the deity he has offered a reasonable reverent worship, and endeavoured to be useful and kindly to his fellow man. What can he have to fear at the hands of the God of all mercy? If in any matter he was mistaken, do we not all err? Is there any man who will assert that when eternity shall disclose its secrets, he will be found to have possessed absolute infallible religious truth! If there be such an one, a special revelation must have revealed it to him, and no evidence he is able to

produce would justify us in adopting conclusions which are opposed to our reason and conscience, even had we the power of will to force ourselves to accept his creed. Therefore the prospect of after felicity which a Unitarian enjoys, must be as reasonable as that of any member of another of the multitudinous sects into which the Christian world is divided. A list of these, with but a brief account of each, fills a large volume. Are all except those who hold a certain theory of salvation—the young and old, the learned and ignorant, the zealous convert to a new creed and the man born in a particular faith, who has remained in his own church without inquiry—are all these marching on the downward road? Every scheme of Christian salvation (as the phrase is), can only be compounded of men's fallible opinions, as to what is taught in the New Testament; and for a man to declare that he accepts any confession of faith when conscience and heart revolt, must be an act which merits punishment and not reward.

"I regret to say that numbers of people make no effort to understand our religious position. Many accept without inquiry reports intended to weaken our influence, and prevent the diffusion of our free principles. Because we do not formulate a creed, and impose it on all who come to us, we are said to have no religious belief. Unitarianism has been called a half-way house to infidelity. Heated zealots have

been known to declare that we are worse than Atheists. It pains me to repeat cruel charges, so often rebutted; but while they are put forth we are bound to show their gross injustice. Our religious belief is not less real and dear to us because it is built upon our individual judgment, and not upon the dictum of others. Instead of Unitarianism being a mere halting-place on the road to complete scepticism, I can offer my honest testimony that it has saved numbers personally known to me from unbelief; and had there been no alternative between accepting the creed of orthodox sects and infidelity, they and thousands more must have become infidels. With great relief and delight these found that all the hallowing influences of religion might be enjoyed and treasured without accepting a creed from which reason and heart revolted. The statement that Unitarians who pay reverent worship to the One Universal Father, and strive to keep the commandments of His Son, are worse than men who deny God and mock at Christ, is unworthy of any reply. It is plainly the language of that blind and savage spirit of bigotry which is not amenable to argument, and thinks it does God service by breaking the very laws which he has ordained.

"All religious doctrines are but 'broken lights,' finite conceptions of infinite things. As we are not constituted alike, nor capable of receiving truth in its entirety, we must have different thoughts about

theology. But while we present to God the free-will offering of grateful, trusting hearts, and lean on Him in joy and trouble, filled with an overwhelming sense of his compassion and tenderness, we are in no alarm lest He should not accept us. He asks not the naked confession of a creed, nor the religion of fear and compulsion, nor the worship of respectability. Is there here in the heart the sincere desire that it shall become right with God?—is there in the life a strenuous sustained effort to obey conscience in all things? Those are the solemn issues which each one is bound to try in that interior court which God has set up in every human soul.

"I have heard it insinuated that we continue to adhere to our opinions not without secret misgivings. I suppose every man who will have a religion of his own meets with difficulties, and passes through mental struggles in which he is not unconscious of perplexity. We do not assert that we enjoy any immunity from such mental phases. Doubt, though painful, is the mother of inquiry. Truth does not always lie upon the surface. As with the body, so with the mind; pain is often the sign of returning health. But if this charge be made especially against the professors of Broad Christianity, it is unfair and untrue. Who has the power to look into our hearts and tell the world that of which we ourselves are not conscious? Are we not justified by what we know in retorting the accusation? Men of all classes, and

of all the popular churches, make no secret of the fact that their hold on the ancient straitlaced theology is loosening every day. In social intercourse you hear them candidly declare that, though they still attend their wonted places of worship, they cannot, and do not believe the one-half of what they listen to Sunday after Sunday. Not seldom they will tell you that their faith in God and immortality, and their obedience to the behests of duty are weakened and not fortified by the crudities and contradictions mingled with a religion which, in a more rational form, they could receive and live by.

"These are not matters of surmise, but of almost daily experience, with those who continually mix with men of all conditions, and are careful to observe the veering of the theological vane.

"This is not the time when Unitarians, and generally those who in other Churches sympathize with them, need be dispirited. Hosts of books are pouring from the press in which the main principles we have long defended are taught. The unjust reproaches to which I have alluded do not fall upon us alone, but upon great scholars—German, English, and American—not members of our Church, whose lives have been devoted to the study of the Bible and the wide field of theological inquiry. The inalienable right of private judgment, which is the heritage of all Protestants, is freely exercised. A theology not greatly differing

from our own is taught in thousands of professedly Orthodox pulpits. The old forms of speech may be retained, but the soul is gone out of them. Abuse, misrepresentation, threats of future punishment, are losing their power. Men are not so easily frightened as they were; nor are the means once successful in stopping men's mouths so effectual.

"Of course, there are the timid, who dare not speak out their mind, and the time-serving, who fear that worldly interests would suffer if they proclaimed their real sentiments. This fear is now in a great degree groundless as well as unworthy. Men must respect candour and straightforwardness, and one who appears what he is, and supports the church which teaches what his conscience approves does not so commonly suffer in the end for his consistency.

"Then there are thousands of shrewd working men whose minds are in suspense. They are faithless and worshipless amidst what our orthodox brethren are wont to call 'the full blaze of Gospel truth.' The old methods have failed to reach them. Houses of prayer have multiplied in the land, but these classes are not found therein. Meanwhile our duty is clear; and if I have in these lectures expressed the sentiments which to your minds appear nearest the truth, I ask you to unite with us who are labouring in the cause of rational Christianity.

"Let us seek to stem the rush of bigotry on the one

hand, and the tide of sceptical indifference on the other, conscious in our heart of hearts that he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him; and that all who fear God and work righteousness are accepted with him. Amen."

RITUALISTIC UNITARIANISM.

I AM well aware that this title will at first sight appear self-contradictory, or, even after mature consideration, may possibly be deemed inapplicable to the paper above which I have written it. I have paused for some moments contemplating it; I have tried others as substitutes; but after all, I find no other that quite so fitly embodies the impression on my own mind which I wish to convey to my readers; I therefore let it stand, though with any amount of reservation, and quite conceding that the two elements of which it is composed seem a little incongruous.

Setting out in search of Heterodoxy one Sunday morning, I found myself involved in a Sabbatarian difficulty. The North London Railway, by which I wished to travel, does not admit of Sabbath Days' journeys, under any consideration. My destination was Islington, and Islington is much too pious to allow Sunday pilgrims without peas in their shoes; so I had to go by omnibus.

My original intention was to attend a lecture on Spinoza, which was announced to be given under the auspices of the Humanitarian Association, on that particular Sunday, in the Claremont Hall, Penton Street.

There I presented myself at eleven o'clock, the hour appointed, and found, at the foot of the stairs leading to the Hall, a female engaged in the useful but unphilosophical pursuit of blackening boots. It was five minutes past eleven before she deigned to notice my existence, and then she informed me that "they" —by which abstraction I understood the lecturer and audience—had not come, and she did not know when they would, whereupon she relapsed into her boot-cleaning, and, being of a retiring disposition, I withdrew.

I saw no appearance of "them" in or about Penton Street, so, as time was precious, I resolved to forego Spinoza, and push on for Unity Church, Islington, where I had seen it announced the Rev. H. Ierson was to preach a sermon with the very attractive title, "This Longing after Immortality." I got late, of course, thanks to Spinoza and the boots; Mr. Ierson was reading his First Lesson as I entered Unity Church and passed unchallenged to a pew—for the seats are all free and unappropriated there.

The Church is a handsome Gothic one, with spire, and divided into nave, aisles, and transepts. No one would guess, indeed, that he was not in a church of the Establishment. Excellent stained glass filled several of the large windows in the aisles; and the east end of the church, as well as each extremity of the transepts, was lighted with a catherine-wheel window of tinted glass. Large coronæ hung from

the roof, two of them being lighted, though the day was clear and bright—such a "dim religious light" was produced by the "storied windows!" There was an altar or Holy Table, railed off in an apsidal chancel, surrounded with encaustic tiles, and appropriate texts blazoned in ecclesiastical characters, so that the *tout ensemble* was very "correct" indeed. The effect was rather marred by Mr. Ierson performing the whole service in the pulpit arrayed in his academical gown. Had he only put on a little green and gold, and thrown in a genuflexion here and there on the altar steps, we might have fancied ourselves in any Ritualistic church in London.

The service was very much of an abridgment of the Church of England Morning Prayer, but much shorter, the Psalms, for instance, being selected instead of read straight through, and the Lessons left to the discretion of the minister. After the Benedictus, and, as it were, in place of the Creed, the Beatitudes were given, the choir repeating the substance of each after it was read, and singing a kyrie after the last. The effect of this was very beautiful indeed. Then came a short litany and some prayers, the responses and amens being all choral, adapted, if I mistake not, from Tallis and Marbecke. The organ was on the north side of the chancel, and the choir, which was a mixed one, occupied several front pews close by it. The hymns were especially good, and sung to most exquisite melodies. Before the final

hymn Mr. Ierson announced that the subject of his evening sermon would be "The Catholic Church," a subject chosen "because so many were at that time struggling to find it."

But the subject of the morning—"The Desire of Immortality"—was the one which interested us most, because I had frequently heard it laid to the charge of Liberal Christianity, that it left us uncertain as to what Keats calls—

> The grandeur of the dooms
> We have imagined for the mighty dead.

How far this was the case I should now hear, and the following eloquent discourse amply proves. I give it in full, finding my own abstract meagre and unsatisfactory:—

"'*To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.*'—Romans ii. 7.

"There was a Jewish proverb, familiar in all likelihood to the Apostle, that might have suggested the kind of expressions here employed to set forth the great aim, and the great reward of a life of virtue and piety. He speaks of seeking after honour and immortality in the way Jesus declared to be the way of eternal life, in patient well-doing. The sentiment is parallel in the more ancient saying, with the difference only—an immense one in effect, though it make no change in the principle—that now the idea

of life has expanded, it has become the life of a future and unending glory. We remember, therefore, that in the Gospel has been brought to clear light, life and immortality, when we compare with the text the words, 'He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.' Or, as again the Apostle repeats, 'Glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good.' 'To them who seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well-doing, eternal life.'

"But I would remark, it is indeed to this end I have quoted from the ancient book, that in both passages the belief on which they rest is in force and essence the same—the conviction of perpetual justice in the rule of a righteous God. Without such faith in God there is no solid ground for reasoning that shall assure us of the life hereafter; and it is precisely those who do not believe in God that believe neither in the Immortal Hope. But they admit that benevolence and justice are not the predominant law of things in the life to which their theory confines the human race. James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, inferred from this fact that there could not be a good and just Creator of men. A pure and righteous and benevolent being, he thought, could never have formed men for such a life of suffering and moral evil. The inference was a rash one, but not without reason if the present is the whole of human life. He was arguing in a vicious circle; because the present life

offers no solution of its own mysteries to one who has no faith in God and in the life to come, for the two are inevitably connected, the one grows out of the other.

"Therefore it was that the heathen philosophers were not able to carry their thought of a future life beyond the region of speculation; it never became with them a practical stimulus and encouragement to right conduct. They wanted the Hebrew faith in the One good and righteous Ruler, holy and wise, whose faithful providence concerns itself with individual as well as general welfare.

"For the compensations of the present life are certainly not complete, at least as regards individuals; though the pious Hebrew mind, with its firm faith in a just and true God, was slow to admit the fact, until it learned to look beyond the limits of present being for the completed circle of the Divine administration. Earnest and devout men, as we see in the Old Testament, tried in various ways to solve the difficulty. Sometimes they seem to say that the virtuous are sufficiently rewarded in the approval of their own conscience—in the favouring light of the Divine countenance; and sometimes they were content to leave the matter in the hands of God, as a question beyond human penetration—a subject for submission to the sovereign Ruler, in humble but blind reliance that His ways at least should be justified. But there was always the lurking sense of something still wanting—a feeling that the Almighty would surely make

clear His equity and truth to the mind itself that trusted in Him. For even if they saw that a period of temporary suffering might prove of service to pious feeling, and so prepared themselves to say, 'Blessed is the man whom God correcteth,' still the question would recur, To what end is this Divine discipline?—a question difficult to answer if the trial lasted through life, and there was no life after it, in which the happy results of the trial could appear.

"There was, moreover, another aspect of the question, very trying to men whose system of religious law and obedience had accustomed them to regard peace and prosperity as the manifest tokens of Divine blessing. This was the frequently successful career of wickedness. Whatever consolations good men might have, in whatever way the many afflictions of the righteous could be accounted for, though it might be right, at least it could not appear natural; it was to be expected that the righteous should triumph under a rule of righteousness. For they could see that whilst the good have sorrows from which the bad are free, the more wicked men become the less do they feel even the suffering of remorse, unless some tide of adversity sweeps away the prosperity in which they trusted. Then they said that time must restore the equilibrium of justice. The triumph of evil could not be for ever, nor the beloved of God suffer under permanent wrong. And you know how often in the Psalms and elsewhere this is the simple explanation

resorted to, that the anomalies of Providential dealing subsist only for a time; that all shall come right in the end; that bad men are lifted up (you will find something of the same kind also in ancient heathen writings) in order that their subsequent fall may be more conspicuous; and that good men purified in the furnace of trouble come out at last to greater honour.

"For those who believed in a righteous God, and who thought it a part of pious duty 'to wait,' in the common Old Testament phrase, 'for His salvation,' this solution of the present inequalities in retribution and reward might well have appeared sufficient, if only experience had confirmed its truth. But experience did not, nor does it now, testify to any such fact as that the judgments of God receive in the world, whether as concerns the good or the bad, adequate expression. The cases are exceptional and not the rule in which the path of the good man shines out through darkness in perfect brilliancy at its close. Many a heroic, devoted, and pure life goes down in sudden eclipse. Many a noble career has been overclouded in pure self-sacrifice, that could not even explain itself to the honourable estimation of men. The grandest natures are not always those that come high into the world's esteem. They work for duty, or suffer in patient silence, with only the Father's eye upon them. And you are aware how hard it is to convince men from observation that there is a moral government at all—one at least that may be relied

upon. If we knew only of the present life, and nothing of God from our own nature to enable us better to interpret the facts of common experience, we too might count it mystery that men should have, deservedly, or equally without desert, to bear the whips and scorns of time—

> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

"But we know that the issues of divine government need larger scope than the limits of present being afford. It is a grand scale on which God works. One may see enough of the ways of God to understand the method of His rule—the principle that guides it—to teach us, as Matthew Arnold says, that there is a power above us that makes for righteousness; but we cannot help also seeing that for the present its work is incomplete.

"Shall we say then that there is no present kingdom of God?—that it is only to come hereafter in better times than our own?—that all the wrong and suffering of thousands of years must be simply ignored, must enter for no account in our estimate of the divine equity? It must be so if this life were all; and then the regret would be, that we should not positively know this, but are tormented with ideas of justice that shall never be accomplished, though they seem to be divinely implanted in our nature. For as to a moral rule, that only imperfectly controls the in-

dividual who rebels against it, and but insufficiently guides, and insufficiently protects the ready subject of its sway—who could willingly believe it to be the rule of this All-perfect, the All-good and righteous? The proper end of government is in the individual, not in the mass. Humanity is nothing, a mere abstraction of it does not mean, does not include, the separate persons whom in the mass we call mankind. I can understand no doctrine of divine rule and justice that could shut out the claims of any single human being. It might be a rule of sovereignty, of mere brute creative power and will, that should content itself with carrying forward, by processes of inexorable law, such as we perceive in constant action, mere ends of development, the weakest always suffering, as Mr. Darwin shows, and only the strong surviving, and without any concern for personal interests or feelings; but from the moment you induce moral elements into the question, it is completely altered. If you say that the Divine is a moral government, then the individual comes to the front; you are no longer treating of mere phenomena. You are considering persons, not things. The term has no other meaning. Moral rights, duties, feelings, claims, disapprobation, or approval—it is only because men are persons that such ideas are possible, expressive of their mutual relations, so far as these are moral relations. And if there be in the Almighty nothing to correspond with all this—for all moral relations must needs be mutual—

then is our whole life an illusion. We are but clay in the potter's hands, mere dead matter pretending to be alive, framed with power to deceive itself into that strange fancy.

"To say then that God is a moral being, and that His rule in the earth is a moral government, is to imply that to every moral creature, to every individual endowed with moral sentiment, He stands in the relations of holiness, justice, truth, goodness—relations that cannot be satisfied with the temporary issues of any single human life. And hence man's seeking for glory, honour, and incorruption, in the way of well-doing most pleasing to the Divine Will, to which the promises given of eternal life are but an appeal, made in the fittest manner of such appeal to that moral nature in the Most High that is man's only trust, that gives to the universe its sole intelligible meaning. But it is the *universal* trust, the claim of all moral natures, based on that uncreated law, the law of eternal right, which is the Divinest in the Divine, the first and last, the very all and essence of Him whose greatest glory it is to delight in love and righteousness.

"I admit that under present limitations man cannot recognise in all its force this close moral relationship between himself and his maker, though it is our religion to feel it; and our best means of religion are those which strengthen the sentiment, not only in obedience but in trust. Only in this way does the

final aim discover itself of God's education of His children. But we may see the greatness of the end in the very difficulties through which that end has been so often seen in the life and character of good and pious men, victoriously fulfilling it. For the ends of present being man is under what we call phenomenal law. He must die, for example, and give place to others. But see what death is to such a being —for we are not, we cannot even make ourselves, by utmost effort of degradation, to occupy the easy level of a brute insensibility, companions of the beasts that perish. Things do not come and go with us, they are remembered and foreseen. It is the demand of such a life that it be not so vainly and at the same time so painfully ended; or on the other hand, that we might be, we will not say mercifully, but wisely and reasonably spared the knowledge. This over-conscious intelligence compels the inference, while it creates the desire of continued life beyond the grave.

> 'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us,
> 'Tis Heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
> And intimates eternity to man!

"We know that for this world natural law must take its course, and that the risks of frequent painful experience are as unavoidable for us as for the rest of organized creation; but for man even these are contradictions to his inner sense of being—an oppression that would become intolerable, if he were not conscious also of certain moral defects, if he did not feel

himself to need some discipline of suffering, and if this hope of recovered harmony, of being in a better life were absolutely withdrawn from his nature. He knows that for the moment the laws must take their course; but when they shatter recklessly the sweetest and dearest elements of his being, he knows *that* also, and with the knowledge, sees that if this be truly the end, he is suffering a needless, an added, a wantonly inflicted pain. Inevitable pains there may be of change and accident; and so far as concerns this world we may perceive that what we call penalties of natural law are beneficent in their intention, life and health-preserving in their common effect; but why should man alone be tormented with so great susceptibility of fear, and the wearing and sad memory of a thousand things better forgotten? If the training of life concerns this life only, it is surely overdone; for as to things of importance, nay, as to almost everything of real interest to us, we are made to feel infinitely more than is required for the simple conduct of life. We must needs think it an extravagance, an error in the human constitution, that we should learn, for example, to live our life by the law of such deep affection, of affection that so long survives, and often so painfully, the objects that called it forth now taken from us by the mere but inevitable accident of death. Why should we not have been rather moved by unconscious instincts of self-exhausting passions, that virtually perish with their objects, instead of serving, like

memory and affection to perpetuate the parting grief?

"Thus might all the ends of temporary being have received sufficient accomplishment; but affection, man's noblest attribute, becomes his greatest source of pain; the special occasion of perpetuated sorrow, useless and vain, if those we loved are indeed gone from us for ever—a superfluous affliction, I say, one that answers no reasonable end. Better not love so deeply what we must so surely and so quickly lose. But truly the inexorable laws pay little heed to the higher feelings which a certain philosophy would teach that they create for needless torture. It is the glory of a man to care for the things of the spirit—for intellect and taste and the pursuit of goodness and the multiplication in life of high and noble and affectionate interests: yet these are precisely the things about which we are made most to suffer, and which at their highest and best, a certain doctrine of philosophy takes utterly from us. Why should we encourage these lofty ambitions, these pure affections that so become our torment? Were it not better to train up children in cold indifference, in the barrenness of feeling that shocks us whenever we encounter it, but which after all, on such a theory, would surely be the highest wisdom?

"And what is that progressive tendency, that desire of improvement, which characterizes the human race from the moment of its escape from primitive

barbarism, that zeal of refined and cultivated natures to become perfect, which is the true 'longing after immortality?' *We* only of all creatures do so aspire—we only feel so keenly the pangs of disappointment, and that holy discontent that looks eagerly for a life, not alone of better conditions, but also of a better nature. We want scope and means to right ourselves, to live a fuller and nobler life, more near to what we feel the true and highest ends of being. People have said that vice is its own punishment, and virtue should be its own reward, and in that saying is some element of truth; but the vice and the virtue scarcely exist of which this remark can be pronounced altogether true. There are on both sides counteracting influences. There are few perfect either way, and not many persons who would not feel thankful to live a renewed life, escaped from errors and folly, from defects and sin. And who should say that it is a selfish hope that looks for the reward of struggling virtue in the perfected life, above all fear of temptation, in the happiness of unbroken virtue, in the blessedness of Divine favour? If we value a gift because we love and esteem the giver, surely it is idle to pretend that any creature can be above receiving the rewards that are only looked for in the grace of a loving and holy God.

"Some have said that the desire and hope of another life, so widely cherished by men, may be explained quite naturally; that it is in fact the common love of

life transformed, that comes of the useful law of self-preservation, the wise law of all organized being. And to this it may be added, that such negative instinct may become positive wish, by act of reflection, for those who can appreciate the wonders of nature, the charm of healthy existence, and feel delight in a universe so glorious that they could not well bear to leave it. But I have not reasoned from such mere longing desire. I have reasoned only from the nature that cherishes such desire, and from God's faithfulness, its true inspirer. I know that the men who have felt it the most profoundly have been the best and wisest, and that we always feel it in the ratio of our own fulness and wealth of being. And so I understand it to be a divine promise, a covenant of the Father, the Lord of Righteousness, the object of all our trust, the foundation of all our hope, a covenant with every soul of man, made naturally, therefore, in most marked and clearest expressions through him in whom the divinest type of man was realized.

"It has been said with truth that 'Jesus was the first practical teacher of the immortality of the soul.' For it is one thing to conjecture, to wish, to hope for, to believe in immortality as a philosophical speculation; another thing to arrange all our plans and purposes, all our inward and outward life in accordance with it.

"He has connected this truth most intimately with the other practical truths of religion, and referred all the rest to this in such a manner as no teacher before

Him ever did. And while in Him we see that death is but the door, the way of entrance to a higher state of being, we are made to feel how in the spiritual life of His instruction, in His perfect trust, in His intimate knowledge of the holy and just, of the true and loving Father, may already be realized the sense of that higher and better state begun. For the life of Christian godliness is already here an earnest of the life that is to come. Have we not often witnessed it when those most dear to us have been taken away, as we beheld their patient continuance in well-doing, that the spirit of the higher life manifested itself beforehand in the corresponding 'patience of hope unto the end?' And amidst our suffering the glory of eternal life has come to us—come like the parting beam that prophesied of to-morrow's certain hope, giving to our religion a new and deeper interest, the interest of our best affections; to our sense of duty the stimulus of a new desire to follow them worthily in 'the high calling of God' in well-doing; and a more real and larger fulness of meaning to our own aspirations after the perfect life."

The congregation of Unity Church is a colony transplanted whole and entire from the chapel in Carter's Lane, and this latter had a history of its own, taking us back to the time when the term Presbyterian had a larger meaning than it now bears, being nearly equivalent to our term Unitarian. On the occasion

of the congregation passing from the old dingy chapel in Blackfriars to the church whose worship I have described above, Mr. Ierson preached a sermon which he designedly made a *resumé* of that history. He said:—

"This church has subsisted for now very nearly two hundred years. Six years from the present date (1861) will have completed the second century from that of its formation under one of the Two Thousand ejected clergy of the Restoration. On the 24th of August next year, the general body of English Dissenters will celebrate the bicentenary of that memorable event—the mournful triumph of the High Church reaction under the Chancellor Clarendon—the passing of the second Act of Uniformity, which reimposed upon the Church of England that heavy burden of subscription which in our own time so many of the better-informed among the clergy find it hard to bear. The Presbyterians in the Church had no wish to leave it; they were driven cruelly from it. In aiding as they had done the re-establishment of the monarchy in the person of Charles the Second, they had been led to hope for better treatment at his hands. They had in fact received from him a distinct promise that their scruples of conscience in regard to certain practices of the Church should be respected, if not by direct alteration of such usages, at least by a wise toleration of their own less rigid conformity to them. Certain of their chief ministers had indeed

been appointed among the royal chaplains, and a conference was held to debate upon the matters of which the Presbyterians complained. But the party at the time in power were resolved to accept no terms of compromise. They absolved the King from his promise by a not uncommon device of clerical casuistry, and then drove out from the Church as enemies the men who had only desired its reform. They probably did not believe that so large a number of the clergy would make the noble sacrifice which they did. But they were jealous of Presbyterian influence, and determined to suppress it. Adherence to the Genevan platform, as it was called, had widely extended amongst the English clergy from the early years of Elizabeth, and the system had struggled hard for above twenty years of her reign to establish itself within the Church. It was also within the vivid memory of the Churchmen of the Restoration, that the National Establishment had been for a short time Presbyterian. It is true that the Presbyterians did not now desire supremacy in the Church. As a party they had learned the lesson of adversity. They asked only for such reforms as might have led to their own continued comprehension in the ranks of the established clergy. But the spirit of faction prevailed, and the bigoted law drove them forth, to be followed everywhere by other yet more cruel enactments, which persecuted many of these honest and true men wherever they went, even to the mean extent

of forbidding them to teach for their bread. The violent proceedings were renewed against them which had been employed from about a century before, under Elizabeth, to put down the Puritan dissent which the obstinate retention of abuses within the Church had created. They were prevented in many places from meeting together for worship. In their most retired and humble meetings they were never secure from molestation, either by the authorities or from the rage of popular prejudice. The chapel in Blackfriars in which this congregation worshipped, was one of a considerable number of Dissenting meeting-houses that were assailed by the High-Church Sacheverell rioters of 1710. During all the years before the accession of William, as even at intervals thereafter, the public religious services of Nonconformists were carried on under the perpetual fear of arbitrary violent suppression. . . . .

"The founder of this congregation was Matthew Sylvester, a clergyman formerly of Lincolnshire, who is said to have settled in London in or about the year 1667. From Rutland House, their first place of worship, the congregation removed, soon after the Revolution, to another in Meeting-house Court, Blackfriars. In the former place, Mr. Sylvester had enjoyed the serviceable help of the celebrated Richard Baxter, and afterwards of Edward Calamy, another well-known Nonconformist, who was then in the commencement of his ministry. It was only a short time

before he became assistant to Mr. Sylvester, that Mr. Baxter had been released from his last imprisonment. He had been sentenced by the infamous Jefferies on account of certain passages in his comment on the New Testament, in which he was charged with sedition in having reflected, as was inferred, upon the prelates of the Church of England. The few last years of his life were spent in the service of this church, which after his death appears to have diminished rapidly in numbers. . . . .

"Such," says Mr. Ierson, "has been the history of a Nonconforming church. The principle was carried further by force of circumstances, and we are also a Nonsubscribing church. If we consider this point, we shall be led to observe the gradual development of religious thought amongst us, connecting our present convictions with those earlier formed by this congregation, under the genial shelter of a wise Christian liberty. . . .

"It would require something more of a historic disquisition than we can here attempt, to explain the varied influences that may have contributed to this early settlement of heterodoxy in the congregation of Sylvester and Wright, which entered indeed under the latter of these, its second minister, or founder, as we have considered him. The fact ought to be clearly understood, that this pulpit has never been committed, in any proper modern sense of the word, to orthodox Calvinism or Trinitarianism; and that the anti-Trini-

tarian conviction has been from the first at liberty of proclamation. Humanitarian, I suppose, the ministry of this church never was before the time of Mr. James Yates and Dr. Joseph Hutton; but it was essentially free; and Mr. Pickard, in the middle of the last century, though not himself approving what were called Socinian views, had for his assistant for six years the Mr. Tailer who was 'the intimate acquaintance,' it is said, 'and cordial friend of Dr. Priestley.'

"Without pretending to offer a history of the positive development of liberal opinion which has crowned the freedom of the English Presbyterians generally, we may remark that indications are not wanting of the fact that the Athanasian Trinity was early regarded by many of them with dislike. The whole subject was treated in some of their assemblies as a purely open question, even before the Parliamentary civil war. With regard to the congregations formed subsequently to the persecution of 1662, many circumstances may be supposed to have aided the gradual enlightenment of men from whom no subscription to creeds of human invention had taken away the power of new and clearer perceptions of divine truth. The Arian controversy in the Church, occasioned by the presumed heresies of William Whiston and Dr. Samuel Clarke, might perhaps be considered the most probable exciting cause of Presbyterian questioning upon such matters. This was followed by the Bangorian controversy, which brought to light a large amount of

what we should now called Broad Church principle among the Established clergy. Every movement of this nature in the National Church would be certain to excite interest in the minds of the English Presbyterians, who still looked with respect upon the Establishment from which they had been cast forth, and who perhaps had not yet abandoned the hope of some possible comprehension hereafter that might restore them to their former position. There are those amongst us who still entertain such hopes, destined still, probably, to disappointment. . . . .

"It may have been that the bold assaults of the Deistical writers—of Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, and some time afterwards of Tindal—upon the Christian revelation, constrained the Presbyterian ministers to re-examine the foundations of divine truth, and taught them to perceive the importance of holding it by a law of rational conception, which would of necessity set aside innumerable orthodox indefensible traditions of interpretation and belief. They would perhaps see, for example, with us, that the only unanswerable portion of Bishop Butler's Analogy, written at the time, is that which represents Christianity to coincide with the eternal law of rectitude, which they had from the first made it the chief business of their preaching to proclaim. They would little sympathize with the violent dogmatic denunciations of Whitfield and the Wesleys and their numerous ignorant disciples, which began, we may observe, about

the time of the opening of this place of worship. Better in all probability than our fathers could, we are enabled to appreciate at their just value the public service which these men rendered in an era of social darkness and degradation, by their strong and incessant appeal to the conscience of the lower orders of society. Their extravagances would rather lead to a reaction in contemporary thoughtful minds, against forms of Evangelical dogma upon which they laid an intolerant and fanatic stress.

"But when, in 1766, appeared 'The Confessional' of Archbishop Blackburne, a protest against theological tests in the Church, which is known to have produced a powerful impression upon the public mind, and a petition was signed by two hundred and fifty of the clergy for relief from the bondage of doctrinal subscription, the body of English Presbyterians must have received strong confirmation of the value of their own liberal position. The theology of the Archdeacon appears, indeed, to have been in advance of that held at the time amongst them. This was in the latter period of Mr. Pickard's ministry, and it was only four years before his death that Mr. Theophilus Lindsey, one of the friends of Mr. Blackburne, resigned his living in the Church, and began, in a room in Essex Street, to preach as a Unitarian. Dr. Disney, a son-in-law of the Archdeacon's, withdrew from the Church at the same time. Then came Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, and, we must add, the noble-hearted Dr. Channing,

and along with these and after them many other able and zealous men professing the Unitarian faith, whose influence has aided to give to the Presbyterian churches the character which they now bear. The original Socinian movement in Poland and Transylvania dates from the middle of the sixteenth century. With the existing Church of the latter country we have entered not long since into fraternal communication; but the rise of English Unitarianism owes nothing to any foreign force; it was indigenous, the natural result of free research into the true sense of the Divine Word. Our churches are now happily identified with all the new possibilities of Unitarian development which have been since displayed. Unfettered by exclusive and intolerant trust-deeds, or by any sinister law of subscriptions, we hope ever to continue in open-hearted readiness to receive the ever-renewed blessing of divine light in the interpretation of Christian truth. In this country few professed Arians remain, but neither is the low Humanitarianism upheld generally amongst us which may have been once contended for. The essential humanity of Jesus is seen to contain within its unaltered forms and finite characteristics the complete and unquestioned power of manifesting the transcendent moral perfection and loving purposes of the Infinite Father. Such is the doctrine which we carry with us from this place, with all its consoling kindred views of the filial relation of mankind to God, and all its fitness of harmony

with the clear indications of divine truth, whether discovered in the research of nature or in the providential course of the world's history. Above all, we take with us the freedom of religious thought which has ever distinguished the teaching of this place—a noble, Christian and apostolic inheritance; 'for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty.' Only, let us not use our liberty as a temptation to unrestraint of whatever kind of evil, 'but by love serve one another.'"

On the whole, Mr. Ierson gave me the impression of firing over the heads of the average Islingtonians, which I took to be the secret of his small congregation; and I find that such is, in a measure, the estimate formed of him by some at least of his own persuasion—namely that he is, so to say, too big for the place. These are not the days of Calamy and Baxter, when men could take their heresy in good strong doses. We prefer our heterodoxy, like our medicine, administered homœopathically and with plenty of sweetening. There is a profound German style about the preaching of Mr. Ierson, which, whilst it suits well my present purpose as an admirable exponent of Unitarian ideas, we can quite imagine taking no great hold upon the plain substantial tradesmen, with their wives and families, or the trim servant girls who, as far as I could judge by appearances, mostly composed the congregation of Unity Church that Sunday morning in "merrie Islington."

HACKNEY PROPAGANDISM.

Ruthlessly pursuing my iconoclastic course, marked out by the ruins of ancient creeds and the removal of traditional landmarks, I found myself in due season at Heterodox Hackney—the most heretical, as far as my present experience goes, of the various quarters of the metropolis. No less than three "irregular" gatherings conspired to seduce me from the paths of orthodoxy on a single Sunday evening. The United Secularists' Propagandist Society, and the Hackney Secular Association, were to meet at Perseverance Hall, Goldsmith's Row, Hackney Road; and Mr. Cox was to enlighten the latter body on the subject of "The Heroes of the Bible:" while at the Minerva Club, Triangle, Hackney, Mr. Hyde was to devote his energies to a solution of the problem, "Would Professor Fawcett be a suitable Representative for Hackney?" I had heard Mr. Myles McSweeney resolve Christ into a Solar Myth, and Mr. Antill summarily condemn the Twelve Apostles as a Company of Cadgers. What remained for me but to have my last fragment of Biblical hero-worship shattered to atoms by the eloquence of Mr. Cox? I would go—

but then I felt anxious as to the answer of the Hackney Minerva *in re* Professor Fawcett. Despite my lengthened spiritualistic experiences, I have not yet mastered the secret of personal reduplication; so my only chance was to deputize at one of these gatherings, for they all came off at the same hour—all Heterodox gatherings, it seems to me, do. Sunday evening is the only chance you have got of catching Heterodoxy in full swing; so that it would take a slice out of a lifetime to do more than focus a few forms of Proteus. This fact, and a very imperfect system of advertisement on the part of our heretics, must be my excuse if I omit any "representative men." So it was that I set off with my *alter ego* for Moorgate Street, whence, I found, the tramway cars would set me down at the Hall of Perseverance and the shrine of the Hackney Athenë respectively.

Out of Goldsmith's Row, which is slummy, just past the almshouses, turns a court which is slummier still; and Perseverance Hall is slummiest of all. There is no outward sign or symbol of the Temple of Perseverance, and you have to grub your way into a most unlikely-looking doorway; but we went in. We would have gone into anything that stood open, for we had long been pacing Goldsmith's Row infructuously in the drizzle of a March evening. Nobody knew where Perseverance Hall was, but everybody told us; so no wonder we wandered. Chance, how-

ever, at last guided us; and as we pushed open the refractory little doors we found ourselves in a small lecture-hall, with the customary paraphernalia of platform and baized table at the farther end. An old gentleman, sitting with his hat on in the front seat, might have been the personification of Perseverance under its aspect of Punctuality; for he told us that there was a good hour to wait yet before the Biblical Heroes would come on for annihilation. He moreover burdened his conscience with the assertion that the Triangle, Hackney, was only five minutes' walk from Goldsmith's Row, so that we could reconnoitre our East-end Athenë, and get back in good time to the happy despatch of the Biblical Heroes. All I can say is, I should like to see that aged heretic do the distance in five minutes, or three times five. There was the most remarkable absence of topographical knowledge in Hackney that Sabbath evening. Tradesmen living within a stone's-throw of the Triangle could not, or would not, direct our pilgrim steps; and when we gained our trilateral destination, nobody appeared to have heard of the Minerva Club, though it was a big house, with the name painted in proportionate characters upon it, as we discovered when we got near enough to see it through the gloom of declining day. As for the Hackney loafers, we might have been asking them for a spot in the interior of Africa. They seemed not to have an idea beyond the fixed centre of their pipes and

the narrow circumference of the adjacent public-house.

They were singing a hymn on the first floor of the building where the devotees of Athenë gathered; but I rightly surmised this could have nothing to do with Professor Fawcett's candidature. These were some orthodox religionists, who took the precaution of turning the key upon me after they had told me the Minerva Club-meeting was downstairs. The room was empty, so I simply left my *alter ego* there, and returned to Goldsmith's Row. The aged party who had given me the five minutes' information was sitting quite in front, so that I could not see whether he wore seven-leagued boots or not. There was a little, apparently *extempore*, meeting going on below the platform, which I found was called for the purpose of deciding whether the United Secularists' Propagandist Society should amalgamate with the Hackney Secular Association or not. Mr. Standring, the secretary of the latter body, a youth of some seventeen years, but with the gravity and self-consciousness of a Socrates, was on his legs as I entered, and there was some little point of etiquette involved in the amalgamation question, which took a good deal of talking to settle; but the proposal was overruled at last. The societies were to remain distinct, but to work fraternally. Then there was a discussion as to the length of time which should be allowed to

"Christians" in debate. "Christian," I find, is a sort of generic term used by Secularists to signify all who differ from themselves, much as, before my present experiences, I might have loosely employed the word "Infidel." Certainly our Freethinking friends applied the name of Christian to many whose Christianity was very shaky indeed.

The room kept filling while these proceedings were going on; and, as I did not feel particularly interested in them, I had leisure to look about me. The first thing I noticed was that the room smelt. I suspect drains; but I know it was nasty—stuffy is, I believe, the correct expression. The people, too, seemed of a lower order than those with whom I had hitherto been brought into contact. There were a few tidy working-men; but with a good many of the gathering the close connexion of cleanliness with godliness had been so practically recognised, that they abjured the former with the latter.

By-and-by time was called; the youthful chairman assumed his place, looking as much like Nestor as he could, and the lecturer, an elderly, pleasant-faced man, stood on his left at the table. There were, I should think, about thirty men and one woman present when he commenced. The male audience was increased gradually during the lecture; but the female, who looked like a decent domestic servant, remained in her minority of one.

Mr. Cox opened by saying that the Bible was a book much misunderstood, not only by Christians but by Secularists; so much so that he had sometimes thought of opening a room where, for twopence a week, people might be instructed in the Bible only. Christians believed the Bible to be infallible; and, in illustration of this assertion, he told a very old story of the sailor who, returning from a voyage, scandalized his aged mother by telling her they had fallen in with flying fish, but found no difficulty in making her believe that they had dredged up one of Pharaoh's chariot wheels from the Red Sea, because the circumstance of his being drowned there was in the Bible. He also added, that either the same old lady or another of similar calibre, declared if the Bible had said Jonah swallowed the whale, instead of the whale swallowing Jonah, she would have believed it.

These flights of fancy at once put Mr. Cox on good terms with his audience; and he went on to say that his view of the Bible might very possibly differ from those of Secularists in general; but he claimed the right—and was applauded for doing so—of Free Thought to draw its own conclusions from premises. —"If any one can prove that I am wrong in what I say to-night, let him do so," he added, "and I shall go home a wiser man than I came."

The Bible, then, he took to be a grand old book, and a fine epic poem. If it were to be read as true, it would be "trumpery;" but the imagination that could

concoct the story of the Creation or the Deluge was far more powerful than that which had elaborated the stories of Baron Munchausen or Robinson Crusoe; because these authors had some facts to go upon, whereas the Bible authors had none. The object of this Epic poem was to give an account of the origin of man; and Mr. Cox found at the first two prominent heroes. These were (1) Jehovah, (2) Satan. The poem was probably written about the time of Solomon. As to Moses, there was no evidence of his authorship; and it was not usual for writers of books to insert accounts of their own death and character. "From Genesis to Kings," he said, "there was one language and one style in the Bible; and all knew how difficult it was to simulate another man's style, from the fact of no one having been able to continue the unfinished story of Charles Dickens. The book in English was a very free translation, with a good many interpolations in italics, which often entirely changed the sense." This was especially the case with the Book of Job. which he regarded as much more modern than the rest of the narrative. Some of the Psalms, too, as, for instance, the 137th, which, he said, though included in the Psalter of David (I am quoting, be it observed, Mr. Cox's statements without comment) plainly referred to post-captivity times. There was, then, clearly no dependence to be placed on the Book itself as to anything it said about when or by whom it was written.

Mr. Cox was greatly given to digressions, and here

expatiated on the rivers of Paradise, which were wrong in some way or other, and considerably exercised his mind; but I could not see how they were relevant to the subject of Biblical heroes: and he broke his shins so grievously over their Hebrew names that I omit the digression and pick him up as he got back again.

The Bible then was an epic poem, very much like Milton's "Paradise Lost," having, as that work had, Satan for its subsidiary hero, and a lot of other devils for inferior characters; still the writer had probably gone up a mountain and seen shells there like what he had previously observed on the seashore. That inspired the idea of the Deluge. It was purely a work of imagination.

"Some author" (it is necessary to note the ambiguity here), some author, Mr. Cox said, had denied that the Jews were ever a great nation,—ever, in fact, anything more than a lot of old-clothes' men. He thought it very likely that they had picked up a book in the East and adopted it. He did not say this was a true theory, but it was a possible one. If Moses had signed his name to the Pentateuch, or if there were any external or internal evidence of his authorship we might believe it; though, even so, it must be remembered that a thousand probabilities did not make one fact.

The Book was curious then, and as such should be kept in the British Museum; but the authorship was

quite unknown. But as to the characters contained in it—Were they such as we could admire? Of course we all mentally supplied the negative answer, and Mr. Cox went on to point out that the virtues inculcated were simply those of savage nations. He traced the growth of peoples clearly enough through the time of tillage and pastoral pursuits, with patriarchal customs, till a time when they came to have judges; and then, "worst of all, kings," (a remark which brought down the house). To hold up these heroes of an incipient civilization for imitation would be to induce a frightful state of society. There was not one Mr. Cox would recommend as a model for his fellow men.

Take Jehovah, he said, and then flew off into a long-winded digression about light. Jehovah was an attempt to represent God in a physical form. Adam and Moses saw Him. In fact, he was merely an exaggerated human character. Further on He became more mythical, acting on the mind by dreams and visions. He was, moreover, inconsistent. He made the world, and then was so disappointed at another being stepping unpolitely in to interfere with the happy pair, that He declared His seven days' work useless, and "repented." He destroyed it by a flood, but still failed to do any good. There was no improvement, for the few He kept alive turned out a thousand times worse than those who had preceded them. So, too, with regard to the Ten Command-

ments. God said in them, "Thou shalt not kill;" but God must have altered His mind since the time of Cain, for Cain was let off with a comparatively trifling punishment, which certainly was no sanction to the principle, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." In the conquest of Canaan this "hero" told the Israelites to go and break every one of the Commandments, though Mr. Cox would not "pile up the agony" (*sic*) by enumerating the particulars of their conduct. The great hero Gibeon too—Mr. Cox meant Jephthah, but it was no matter—Gibeon's sacrifice of his daughter was an argument against God's omniscience.

Of Satan we heard little until Job's time; and with regard to Adam, who was a smaller hero, it was quite certain the poet who wrote the Genesis did not believe Adam was so happy and perfect as he made him out. He was simply a naked savage, living on uncooked vegetables, with no knives and forks to eat them with, or "rough towels to keep his body clean!"

This book, observed the lecturer in conclusion, had done more harm than any other that had ever existed. Why was it bolstered up by priests and tyrants? Why did George the Third want to put the Bible into every child's hands? Because it supported the aggrandisement of the priesthood. For the same reason now it was sought to force the Bible down the throat of every child in school. There was fair hope, however, that this would not be so. Secularism was

spreading. When he was a young man it would not have been safe for him to stand up and speak as he had spoken that evening.

At the conclusion of the lecture, the juvenile chairman invited discussion; and Mr. Jones, an exceedingly pompous gentleman who spoke through his nose, got up on the Christian side—that is, I fancy, merely the anti-Cox side. I have no idea to what denomination he belongs, and rather cling to the hope that he is *not*, technically speaking, a Christian. Mr. Jones reminded Mr. Cox that the Koran upheld the Bible Heroes, and that its miracles were Bible miracles. Abraham, Moses, Ishmael, Job, and even Christ, were among the Koran Heroes.

But Mr. Jones's strong point was history. He clung to Diodorus Siculus. In a fragment of that author, Moses was mentioned as a clever man and a great lawgiver. The Flood was alluded to both by Diodorus and Strabo. Ovid—Mr. Jones lengthened the penultimate with several double O's—Ovid quoted Genesis in all but the names. Several other Greeks and "Latins" did the same. Longinus spoke of Moses as a great lawgiver too. "My friend Cox," said Mr. Jones, in a peculiarly harsh brassy voice, "is not ignorant of this; but he is not honest. He knows who the *man* is that he quoted as saying the Jews were never a great nation—were nothing but old clothesmen. It was Voltaire; and Voltaire told lies." (The youthful chairman tried to over-rule this observation;

but Jones was firm, and the meeting supported him; so the immature president was abashed, and gave way). Voltaire paid a high tribute to Sale, the translator of the Koran; but said that he himself had been for twenty-five years among the Arabs, which he never had. Still Mr. Jones built everything on Diodorus and Strabo, and raved himself hoarse on their testimony. He had them all in his pocket, and would have produced them, only his time was up.

Mr. Cox in reply, said there were no relics of the Jewish nation—no coins for instance, no ruins of their Temple. They had never been a great nation, he repeated; "and as for Moses he was a conjuror, a murderer, and a liar." The climax made the audience laugh; and I felt it was a worthy sequel to Messrs. McSweeney and Antill.

I felt I had had enough, and rose to go; for the odour of the room was telling on me. There certainly were stables or drains near. I lingered awhile near the door where the air was fresher, and found Mr. Jones had taken a Bohn's translation of Diodorus Siculus from his pocket and was reading an extract. He did the same with Longinus; but I could bear no more, and went to seek my *alter ego* at the shrine of Minerva.

It was so late, and he had not come to me, that I thought he must have got crowded in. I knew what these electioneering meetings were. The orthodox people had gone from the first floor; but I

heard the sound of a voice in the small apartment on the basement where I had left my *alter ego*. I opened the door, and beheld him one of eight seated round a table meekly listening to a free and independent Hackney elector who was spouting on the merits of Professor Fawcett. Poor fellow! he seemed glad to see me; rushed to the door, linked his arm in mine and bore me to the tramway, and not until we were fairly off did he fervently thank Providence that it was over. I wanted particulars of the Minerva Club, and asked him if he had got any. He had asked the secretary, who vaguely enough informed him that it was exactly like the Eleusis Club at Chelsea. As I had for some time been vainly seeking to probe the Eleusinian mysteries, that did not afford me much information. In fact it reminded me of the answer recorded in the Oxford "Art of Pluck" by an Undergrad., who, being asked of what material the walls of Babylon were built, replied that the substance of the top differed not from the substance of the bottom, and the material of the exterior and of the interior were likewise identical.

SECULARISM AND SECULARISM.

THERE is a "vanishing point," so to say, in my present subject, where all of what is generally comprised under the term "religious" ideas disappears; we are at once in a new world—a world, I fancy, as little understood by the regular Christian, who goes to Church every Sunday, and accepts the dicta of his parish priest for absolute truth, as would be some distant orb of the solar system, should he suddenly find himself transported to it. Into this unfamiliar sphere it was necessary for me to make a plunge; but how? I had had a somewhat lengthened experience in interviewing the representative men of London—Orthodox and Unorthodox; and if I might venture to generalise my experiences, I should say they were usually accessible in proportion to their orthodoxy. In the ratio of their general acceptance there was, of course, the less reason for their doctrines or practices being concealed. I had probed, at the time of which I write, even the depths of Unitarianism and Theism, which I had once, in my ignorance, deemed abysmal, and grouped heterogeneously enough under the common name of Infidelity. But, to him who descends into the depths, deep after deep opens when

he fancies he has reached the bottom, just as peak after peak awaits the feet of one who would scale the summit of the mountain. Between Theism and Secularism the line is sharp and well-defined. There was another mistake, too, which I made in my age of innocence: I thought that if men differed in their affirmations of religious truths, they must at least be at one in their negations. I had been amazed at the *imperia in imperiis* which I found among the graduated creeds of Christendom, but I was not prepared to find the same fact obtain in the denials of that system. I was quite wrong; and if no other result followed from my present task than the stern warning not to dogmatize about what I do not understand, I should feel that individually I had gained much, and possibly might not have failed to communicate some profitable hints to my readers on the subject of that logical fallacy known as *ignoratio elenchi*, more popularly termed "begging the question." Instead of injuring the cause we misrepresent, we do infinite harm to the one we defend by speaking of our opponents before we have mastered their position.

Happily for me I have no opponents. I neither oppose nor defend; I simply describe; but I feel how lamentably ignorant I was of these matters before I made the examination of them a matter of business and personal observation. I used words to which I attached no definite meaning; and notably so in my use of that single word Secularism. I had no idea

that it admitted of any ramifications, whereas I find, on closer study, that Secularists are divided into two schools of thought, as diametrically opposed to one another as Romanism and Protestantism, or as that other schism which had so taken me by surprise, and which splits Judaism itself into the Orthodox and Reformed persuasions.

After some hesitation, then, and by no means with one consent, I found the representatives of the different branches of Secularism ready enough to give me information. Some of them, I know, fancied I was going to interview them and put them into a tract; and one of the most eminent, after responding to my first advances suddenly collapsed, and withdrew into his shell like a snail whose horns had been touched. I have no notion why, for though I differed *toto cœlo* from that gentleman on matters of religion, I thoroughly appreciated his courtesy, while it lasted, and am only sorry he fancied that he had reason for subsequently withholding information. I sought to beard the lion in his den, and he characteristically informed me that he was no lion; at best he was only a bear.

However, I did interview one communicative gentleman who occupied a position in the world of Free Thought, which enabled him fully to unveil that particular hemisphere which I wanted to "prospect." I will not, of course, so far violate confidence as to give the slightest clue to that gentleman's individuality,

though I must still say that, from the Secularists' position, I cannot see any reason for the excessive, almost morbid objection I find among some of them to have their portraits drawn or their opinions ventilated.

The strong line of demarcation, then, between the two schools of Secularism lies at this fundamental question—"Does Secularism imply Atheism?" To this question Mr. Bradlaugh answers "Yes;" Mr. Holyoake "No." Mr. G. J. Holyoake be it remembered is himself an Atheist as well as Mr. Bradlaugh, but he differs from him on the necessary connexion of Atheism with Secularism. How thoroughly fundamental a principle this forms is daily proved by the fact that while many persons are quite prepared to accept the Secularist position and to blend with it any amount of scepticism, they shrink from the ultimate, and as it seems to them, dogmatic position of Antitheism.

Nothing can be plainer than the words of Mr. Austin Holyoake (brother of the above) as to his own convictions on this subject; and it is perhaps impossible for any one from the Theistic or Christian point of view to grasp the bearings of this question sufficiently to pronounce an opinion upon it. One's own proclivities are necessarily on the side of those who dissociate Secularism from Atheism. Mr. Austin Holyoake has just, as I write these pages, passed away, after a long and painful illness, to make the

"grand experiment;" and I should be unjust if I did not put on record the extreme courtesy with which, at a time when weighed down by that disease which has now terminated fatally, he wrote me a letter at some length on the interesting subject to which I refer. The following are some of his published words on the matter, from which it will be seen that his own convictions were quite clear, and which read doubly solemn and interesting, coming as they now seem to do from beyond the tomb:—

"Atheism is not a system. It has no set of principles. In a sense it is a negation, but it is also an affirmation. An Atheist, if I rightly understand the term, is one who gives no credence to supernatural theories; who rejects all forms and phases of Deism, Theism, and Trinitarianism, as each implies a belief in the existence of a Personal God or Gods. To the Atheist, anthropomorphism is an absurdity. A veritable 'God of the Universe' must be a something outside of, distinct from, and superior to *everything*. The Atheist has no conception of such an existence, and he denies that any human being has ever placed upon record any rational idea of it, or can now express one. He does not exclaim, 'There is no God;' he simply says, that he does not believe in the reality of any God yet manufactured by the religionists of the world. 'All reflective Atheism is suspensive,' remarks G. H. Lewes. And it is but rational to refrain

from dogmatizing on a problem purely speculative, the solution of which every age has yearned for in vain.

"To turn to the affirmative aspect of the question, 'Atheism, properly understood, is in nowise a cold, barren negative; it is, on the contrary, a hearty fruitful affirmation of all truth, and involves the positive assertion and action of highest humanity.' The mind once freed from superstition, is open to the reception of any truth, however new or startling it may be. The Atheist is not necessarily vicious because he rejects the notion of a revengeful Deity. He finds sufficient incentives to right conduct apart from the Bible or any other so-called sacred book. He knows that a violation of the laws of existence will entail 'punishment,' whether committed wilfully or in ignorance; hence he endeavours to understand those laws that he may live in accordance with them. He seeks to promote the welfare of his fellow creatures, knowing that from the happiness of others springs his highest gratification."

The living representative of the dissociation between Atheism and Secularism is the above-named Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, the writer of the article on Secularism in "Chambers's Encyclopædia," which I purpose to abridge in this chapter, in order to clear the ground for further examination of this most interesting problem.

With Mr. Bradlaugh, I understood my Secularist

friend to say, in the course of our modest coffee-house dinner, stood Mr. Charles Watts and Mrs. Law. Mr. Foote, a young and prominent member of the Secular ranks, I shall allow to speak for himself, by quoting a portion of his "Secularism and its Misrepresentatives," a pamphlet forwarded to me from the Hackney Propaganda:—

"This tract," he says, "purposes to deal with maliciously unveracious exhibitions of Secularism, as also with some misrepresentations of it which result from no ill motives; and if, in the course of this, polemic language should be used which would ill comport with the gravity of expression proper to a formal presentation of principles, the writer begs his readers to consider the nature of the task which he has to perform, and to make fitting allowance. He promises never to transgress the bounds of an allowable freedom.

"Before any reader can judge whether the misrepresentations which I undertake to expose are really what I maintain them to be, it is necessary that he clearly comprehend what Secularism is; and therefore I shall now proceed to give a brief yet comprehensive exposition of it. . . . .

"Secularism is founded upon the distinction between the things of Time and the things of Eternity. The interests and the actualities of the life that now *is* are common to all men alike; and by a due observance of

them we may learn to guide our conduct according to principles of virtue. The concerns and possibilities of the life that is to come, if such there be, are variously estimated by different schools of theology, and the most diametrically opposite doctrines respecting the unveiled future are dogmatically taught as infallibly true by the doctors of diverse religions and sects. That such conflicting beliefs can all be true is a logical impossibility, yet each claims to be deduced from the revelation of God, either external or internal, in direct written language, or in the soul of man. Thinking people cannot but suspect that while these discrepant theologies must contain some error, they may possibly contain no truth; and that these discordant teachings, all professing to be revelations of Deity, furnish proof that no voice has ever reached humanity from those mysterious regions whence no traveller returns, that the abysmal gulf of death forms an impassable barrier to the curiosity of man. Whilst we must die before we can ascertain the truth of any belief about the secrets of the future, we can test by actual experience our beliefs about the present. Of things of eternity the most that we can learn are the vague conjectures of imaginative men; of the things of time we can gain certain knowledge. When we trust ourselves to theological teachings we constantly tread in dubious paths, in danger of our fondest hopes being rudely shattered; but when we trust to reason as applied to

secular or worldly interests we stand upon firm ground, unfearful of any such disaster; for we then are guided by positive principles, which have been demonstrated by the universal experience of mankind, and which can never prove unworthy of reliance unless human nature suffer a radical change. Secularism, then, is a substitute for Theology, and gives principles of conduct to those who find Theology indefinite, unsatisfactory, and untrustworthy. Secularism bases itself upon the facts of the present life, and provides a moral code for those who accept it, independently of all extra-worldly considerations. It appeals to man's reason and imagination to exercise themselves upon practical problems which can be solved *here* and *now*, and upon the solution of which depends the happiness of men. It affirms utility, understood in its widest significance, to be the fundamental principle of action, leaving more transcendental principles to those who give prominence to speculative enigmas. 'The good of others' Secularism declares to be the law of morality; and although certain theologies secondarily teach the same doctrine, yet they differ from Secularism in founding it upon the supposed will of God, thus admitting the possibility of its being set aside in obedience to some other equally or more imperative divine injunction. A Secularist does not necessarily deny the doctrine of a life beyond the grave. He may entertain any opinion he pleases about the probability of a future

existence; but he must not permit his conduct during this life to be influenced by any other worldly considerations. He must act justly here, because humanly it is his duty to do so, and take his chance of obtaining possible enjoyments hereafter. If there be a heaven where virtue will be rewarded, he is, by acting virtuously here, insuring the future favours of Deity; and if the celestial economy should be so different from the terrestrial as to reverse our notions of right and wrong, he must wait until he can become duly initiated into the mysterious dispensation. If there be any possibility of entering heaven erect upon two legs, the Secularist is fully entitled to use all legitimate means of effecting a decent entrance therein. As to the existence or non-existence of a God the Secularist is also unfettered in his speculations. Certainly no one would be so presumptuous as to DENY the existence of a supreme ruling intelligence in the universe: that would involve the arrogance of infinite knowledge. The great majority of Secularists, it is true, are not believers in the existence of a personal God. They feel the mystery of the universe to be too profound for their minds to fathom, and humbly bow their heads before it in conscious impotence and wonder; an attitude which evinces far greater reverence than is manifested by the presumptuous dogmatism of theologians. Marcus Aurelius beautifully says, 'Do not act as if thou wert going to live ten thousand years: Death hangs over

thee. While thou livest, *while it is in thy power* be good.' This exhortation contains the pith of Secularism. A true soul will act while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work. He will be self-centred and firm amidst the endless transformations of circumstance around him, and carve to the grave one pathway all his own, communing with the actual earth's equalities, and seeking not 'strength from strengthless dreams.'

> Man is his own star, and the soul that can
> Render an honest and a perfect man
> Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
> Nothing to him falls early or too late.
> Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
> Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.
>
> BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"A Secularist will waste no effort to avert the inevitable; he will strive to discern the laws of physical, moral, and intellectual health, and to act in consonance therewith. Neither will he dissipate valuable energy in making useless supplications to Deity for special interposition on his behalf. Feeling convinced that nature is 'lap't in universal law' he will refuse to resort to any such futile insanity. General laws are inexorably regardless of prayer or praise, and the secularist will therefore strenuously endeavour to ameliorate the condition of mankind by material and available means; and he will seek to alleviate the asperities of life by the benign influence

of love—the element of human goodness which has yet to assert its supreme sway:—

> For nature cannot hear us moan;
> She smiles in sunshine, raves in rain.
> The music born of love alone
> Can ease the world's immortal pain.
>
> ALEX. SMITH.

"This exposition of Secularism, however imperfect, will enable the reader to judge fairly the statements and arguments which follow. To his candour and intelligence, then, the ultimate adjudication is left.

Issued by
THE UNITED SECULARISTS' PROPAGANDIST SOCIETY,
142, OLD STREET, E.C.

"G. W. FOOTE.

"A. W. FROW, *Hon. Sec.*"

We must all agree as to the extreme importance of clearly discriminating between Secularism and Atheism, if there be, as Mr. G. J. Holyoake says, no real connexion between the two, and it is interesting to notice that, in the year 1870, those two gentlemen —whom we might name, the typical Pharisee and Sadducee of the Secular ranks—Messrs. G. J. Holyoake and Bradlaugh, had a two nights' discussion of the question at the Hall of Science, Mr. Austin Holyoake presiding. The examination of the rival theories was therefore pretty nearly exhaustive; and though it is beyond my province to pronounce on their respective merits, it is to the point to observe, as I have done already, that in the way of making

proselytes to Secularism from those who have been trained in theistic schools, there is infinitely more chance of success in Mr. Holyoake's purely utilitarian views than in the distinctively theological method symbolized by the "besom" of Mr. Bradlaugh's Atheism. Whether Professor Newman be right or wrong in saying that the term "Atheist" has come down to us from the Greeks connoted with a certain amount of opprobrium, it is quite certain that immorality does appertain to the title in the minds of nine out of ten dispassionate people. This may be a mere prejudice, of course; but I am looking at the matter for the moment from the Secularists' point of view, and especially as affecting that propagandism which is now so actively entered upon. I fancy I know something of the state of popular feeling on this subject; more perhaps among the middle than quite the lower classes (though something of these latter too), and I am quite sure that while many would be attracted to Secularist principles in their utilitarian phase, they would be at once and probably for ever deterred if the simultaneous profession of Atheism were proved to be a *sine quâ non*.

I make no apology, then, for quoting somewhat largely from this most interesting pamphlet. I cannot, of course, pretend to give anything like a complete view of the discussion; and if I select passage from the speeches of Mr. G. J Holyoake in preference to those of Mr. Bradlaugh, it is for the threefold reason

that (1) the purely utilitarian view of Secularism is less familiarly known than the theological; (2) that Mr. Bradlaugh's views await further treatment in my next volume; and (3) that it appears to me, from my own point of sight, only fair to remove what would certainly be considered by most persons a stigma from a system from which one of its professors claims to have it exempted.

Mr. Holyoake's preface to the published account of the discussion thus characteristically summarizes the point at issue:—

"Mr. Bradlaugh and myself appear—though the public would not expect it—each to have prelatical affinities. He takes the view of Dr. Magee, the Bishop of Peterboro', who holds that the Secular is Atheistic. I hold the opinion of Dr. Thirlwall, Bishop of St. David's, that the Secular is not even irreligious.

"Discussion does one of two things—it produces concurrence of opinion, or it defines and fixes distinctions of opinion, so that the hearers can take warning or make choice. This debate will surely promote one of these ends. My object has been to make as clear as four brief speeches might, that Atheism like Theism, having for its subject of speculation the unknowable and untraceable, must be distinct from, and can never be made the basis of a Secular philosophy of life, which is limited by time and regulated by human experience. If Secularism

must be based on Atheism—what better helpers of humanity are we than the priests? They have to wait until they have convinced an inquirer of Theism before they can give him a foundation for moral duty; and the Atheistic Secularist has to wait in like manner until he has furnished to the human mind a satisfactory map of the untraceable path to nothing. Mr. Bradlaugh cannot say that he is prepared to inculcate duty apart from Atheism, that would be to admit that the grounds of Secular duty are distinct from Atheism—which is what I contend for. What I maintain is the logical existence of a Utilitarian Secularism."

Mr. Bradlaugh opens with an illustration:—

"Instead of saying, 'Theology will first engage the attention,' Mr. Holyoake says, 'Ignore theology.' If a disciple of old Izaak Walton, in pursuit of the amusement derived from the practice of the gentle art, comes in his wanderings upon a preserved stream, can he ignore the proprietor and his gamekeepers? Not a bit of it; he must either boldly dispute the private right claimed by the proprietor, or he must ignore the enjoyment to be found in that stream, and the pursuit of its finny denizens. If Mr. Holyoake, without license or permission, takes a gun and pops at Lord Fitzwilliam's pheasants or partridges, can he do so, and yet ignore the landowner, the watchers, the keepers, the police, the magistrate, and the jail? No; to get his free shooting he must vigorously attack the game laws, and the land monopoly.

"The clergy of the Christian churches claim the sole right in this country of preserving the human mind, with which they claim the sole privilege of sporting, and they regard each new thinker as an unlicensed poacher on their preserves. You cannot ignore them or their claim; you must do battle with the priesthood until their power is destroyed. They seek to entirely monopolize the right of directing human thought, and of creating habit-faith; you cannot avoid them or their influence; you must confront it, and contest its supremacy."

And in introducing the disputants, Mr. Austin Holyoake thus impartially states the basis of the discussion:—

"The proccedings to-night will be of a somewhat unusual character. The disputants, as you are aware, are not exactly opponents; they are both Freethinkers of the extremest school. But I believe there is a confirmed difference of opinion in what may possibly be termed a matter of policy in advocacy. Since 1852, or the early part of 1853, when the word Secularism was first adopted as a general term for Free-thought, there has been some difference of opinion amongst Freethinkers generally as to the full scope of its meaning. Matters have been disputed several times during the years that have elapsed, and it is intended by this debate to-night and to-morrow night, if possible, to settle once and for ever those differences. Mr. Holyoake represents what may be called one school

of Freethinkers, Mr Bradlaugh represents another. Now, the two propositions which will have to be discussed, one to-night and one to-morrow night, are as follows:—'The principles of Secularism do not include Atheism,' that is the proposition for this evening. To-morrow night we shall have to consider the second proposition—'Secular Criticism does not involve Scepticism.' Mr. Holyoake maintains the affirmative of those two propositions."

"Secularism," says Mr. G. J. Holyoake, "keeps its own ground by studying the means which nature places at the disposal of man. It commands resources of self-help—in a Utilitarian rule of morals it finds guidance. It establishes personal desert by service and veracity. In all these principles there is perfect independence of Atheism. If you desire a brief summary, which may be given in a few words, of what the principles to which I have adverted point to, so far as meets the object of this discussion, I would state them thus:—1, Secularism maintains the sufficiency of Secular reason for guidance in human duties. 2, The adequacy of the Utilitarian rule which makes the good of others the law of duty. 3, That the duty nearest at hand and most reliable in results, is the use of material means, tempered by human sympathy, for the attainment of social improvement. 4, The sinlessness of well-informed sincerity. 5, That the sign and condition of such sincerity are—Free-thought—expository speech—the

practice of personal conviction within the limits of neither outraging nor harming others."

And again, in the second evening's debate:—

"The principles of Secularism which I maintain are definable quite apart from the Bible, quite apart from Atheism, are not the imaginary, or incoherent, or capricious selection from a variety of principles resting merely or only on my authority, they were principles which we had acquired by the slow accretion of controversy, by contesting for them from platform to platform all over the country; and when they were drawn up, I submitted them in the aggregate form, many years after they had been separately formulated, to Mr. J. S. Mill, and asked him whether or not, in his judgment, we had made such a statement of Secular principles as were worthy to stand as self-defensive principles of the working-class, as an independent mode of opinion which should no longer involve them in the necessity of taking on their shoulders the responsibility of an Atheistic or Infidel propagandism, except when it suited the purpose of a member to do it. He admitted it in terms which it was a reward to read. It was not until we had the sanction of one so competent to judge, that these principles were promulgated in a definite manner as the principles of a party. The reason they were drawn up in the form ultimately submitted to the public was this, we found in a memorable address by Sir James Stephens, at Cambridge, it was represented that Mr. Grote,

Mr. Mill, and other eminent philosophers whom he named, had been so outraged by the offensive observations of the clergy, by their charging every man of science with infidelity, scepticism, or Atheism, that they refused any longer to take notice of Christianity; they had withdrawn from it, they stood apart from it, they constructed a system of their own, they had a philosophy of their own, they had principles whereby they regulated their own line of conduct; and when the minister spoke, they no longer felt called upon to regard him—they could deny his authority to give an opinion on their proceedings. The clergyman applies to them, but they make no response; he preaches his doctrine, but they condescend to no criticism. The result is, the clergyman, when too late, has to exclaim, 'The philosophers pass us by, they ignore Christianity, and in the end we shall have to become suppliants for their attention, because we repelled them when they were suppliants for ours.' (Loud cheers.) Now it struck me, that was a far prouder and more triumphant thing to accomplish than any wild warring against theologians; we were at the mercy of their overwhelming power. My purpose was to put into the hands of the working-classes principles which should serve their purpose in the same way, and make them equally independent and equally proud, defiant, and unassailable. They should be masters of their own principles, and have a system which should satisfy the requirements

of their mind—all the conditions of morality, and all the conditions of good government. To this end we took that material principle which related to the indefinite improvement of humanity by the improvement of material means. Though the orthodox might trust in God, we should have a power to appeal to science—that available providence of man, which never deserted or failed any one who knew wisely how to use it. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Mill furnished for us that marvellous statement of Utilitarian philosophy, in which he presented to us the Utilitarian view so stated, that it was impossible ever after to misunderstand it, or to misconceive it, or to libel it. So that when we seek to know the measure of a good action we know the rule whereby it may be tested; we know if we consult the good of others with whatever information we possess (having, as I stated last night, a well-informed sincerity) the application of this rule is the utmost good we can do. An ignorant man with his good intentions may go as often wrong as he may go right; if he takes the Utilitarian view, faith will not serve him, nothing but knowledge will serve his purpose; and he is impelled to acquire more and more knowledge, that he may invariably command the truest moral conduct. These rules were laid down quite apart from Atheism."

And he thus concludes, in words the last of which seem like a sad and solemn reverberation of that

"Nemesis of Faith" which commenced the present volume:—

"In an article I wrote some two or three years ago for 'Chambers's Encyclopædia,' I made a statement from which I will therefore read you one passage, and also one passage from the history of the 'Last Trial for Atheism,' which was written more than twenty years ago. Then you will see what I have been saying to-night is no new thing, but I have always or long, said the same thing. All over the country, numerous persons who are the very strength of the respectability and force of the adherents to the Secular system—many whose names are on the records of the National Secular Society, aiding to the utmost of their power, doing as I counselled them, doing the best works they can in the best way they can, as far as they are able—these persons to whom I refer share the opinions I am going to quote. I ought to say in citing this passage, Messrs. Chambers said to me, 'We apply to persons responsible for any new form of opinion in this country to give an account of it, because we prefer a statement from persons responsible for the opinions in question, instead of one from opponents who may caricature them.' This was fair and honest on their part. (Cheers.) My statement was this:—'Secularism is not an argument against Christianity, it is one independent of it. It does not question the pretensions of Christianity, it advances others. Secularism does not say there is no light or guidance

elsewhere, but maintains that there is light and guidance in Secular truth whose conditions and sanctions exist independently, act independently, and act for ever. Secular knowledge is manifestly that kind of knowledge which is founded in this life, which relates to the conduct of this life, conduces to the welfare of this life, and is capable of being tested by the experience of this life. Geometry, algebra, botany, chemistry, navigation, political economy, ethics, are Secular subjects of instruction, distinct albeit from Secularism, which includes the education of the conscience. They are founded on nature, they relate to the uses of this life, promote the enjoyment of this life, and can be tested by personal experience. That which is Secular can be tested in time; that which is Theological is only proveable after death. If a sum in arithmetic is wrong, it can be proved by a new way of working it; if a medical recipe is wrong, the effect is discoverable on the health; if a political law is wrong, it is sooner or later apparent in the disaster it brings with it; if a theorem in navigation is erroneous, delay or shipwreck warns the mariner of the mistake; if an insane moralist teaches that adherence to the truth is wrong, men can try the effects of lying, when the disgrace and distrust which ensue soon convince them of the fallacy; but if a theological belief is wrong we must die to find it out.' (Hear, hear.) Now the last passage, which is perfectly relevant to the subject, seems as if I had written it for

this very discussion, but it was first published some twenty years ago. It concludes the history of the 'Last Trial for Atheism.' I state here—'The priest breaks in upon the integrity of life and diverts its course. He says he makes an addition to our knowledge, we do not find it so. He professes to show us the hidden mysteries of the future, we fail to see them. He simply encumbers us, and we pray him to stand aside. The responsibility of our course is our own, and not his, and we have a right to be left free. Rejecting his advice, he proclaims that we reject truth, honour, justice, love. This is his error, or the retaliation of his disappointment. We appeal to the candid and to the impartial to judge between us. We respect Theology as the science of man's destiny, and regret that it bears no fruit for us; but this is not our fault, and we therefore attempt to solve the problem of life for ourselves.'"

END OF VOL. I.